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Netanyahu to visit Russia next year
TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced Monday that he would make his first official visit to Russia early next year at the invitation of his Russian counterpart, Victor Chernomyrdin. Mr. Chernomyrdin extended the invitation in a 30-minute phonecall to Mr. Netanyahu during which the Russian leader reiterated his government's desire to strengthen bilateral relations and aid the Middle East peace process, the Israeli prime minister's spokesman said. The Russian prime minister expressed an interest in finalising agreements on the supply of Russian gas and petroleum to Israel and said Russia's parliament was currently considering legislation to end double-taxation of businessmen operating in the two countries, the spokesman said in a statement. Mr. Netanyahu's office said he had accepted the invitation to visit Moscow "early next year," but no firm date was mentioned.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية. الراي.

Ciller to visit Jordan soon
AMMAN (Petra) — Turkish Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Tansu Ciller will pay an official visit to Jordan in the second week of November accompanied by an official delegation comprising of senior officials and businessmen. Turkish Ambassador to Jordan Ahmet Umer said Monday. Mr. Umer told Petra his country believed that bilateral cooperation could achieve good results for Jordan and Turkey in particular and the whole Middle East region in general. He described Jordanian-Turkish relations as distinguished. "Jordan and Turkey have historic ties and identical views regarding several issues of common concern such as combating terrorism," said the ambassador. Mr. Umer added that Turkey and Jordan had strong economic ties, but they could be enhanced further through launching joint ventures.

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Kabariti receives Greek minister
AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti Monday received at his office Greek Minister of Transport Sotiris Stavros and discussed with him bilateral relations, means of developing them further in all scopes particularly in the field of transportation in addition to other issues of common concern. They also reviewed the peace process and the European role in the Middle East. Attending the meeting was Minister of Transport Naser Lawzi.

Palestinians march against land grab
KHARBATA (AFP) — Palestinian farmers from a West Bank village outside Ramallah demonstrated Monday against Jewish settlers who had seized their land to expand a nearby settlement. Some 40 Palestinians joined in the march, carrying documents proving their ownership of the fields taken by settlers from neighbouring Kiyat Sefer. Arguments broke out between the farmers and settlers, but there was no violence as an Israeli-Palestinian joint patrol watched over the situation. Israeli soldiers in the patrol prevented the protestors from reaching bulldozers which the settlers have been using to dig up the land. Last week fights broke out in a similar protest at the same spot on the day after the settlers fenced in the land, totalling around 200 hectares, and brought out bulldozers to work it.

Brotherhood members released in Egypt
CAIRO (AFP) — An Egyptian state security court on Monday ordered the release of 10 members of the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood group one month after their arrest on charges of seeking to fan anti-government strife, legal sources said. Three of those released were identified as the sons of a key Brotherhood leader, Hassan Goda, who was sentenced to a three-year prison term last August by a military court, they said.

Hizbollah blasts 'Independence Day'
BEIRUT (AFP) — The Iranian-backed Hizbollah attacked the Hollywood blockbuster "Independence Day" as Jewish propaganda and criticised the Lebanese authorities for allowing it to be shown in Lebanon. "The movie is propaganda for the so-called genius of the Jews and their concern for humanity... blended with the hegemonic power of America," the group charged in a statement. Independence Day, a science fiction thriller directed by Roland Emmerich, tells the story of aliens trying to destroy the earth only to be thwarted by an American-Jewish scientist and computer genius backed by U.S. military might. "The movie clearly hints that the source of danger to mankind emanates from certain parts of the Third World, particularly from the Arab and Islamic World," Hizbollah said. Hizbollah criticised the Lebanese authorities and censors for allowing the movie to be shown, "like a reward for the Jews for their blood-soaked acts in Cana and Safad Al Batikh." More than 100 Lebanese civilians were killed in Israeli shelling of a U.N. camp in the southern village of Cana in April, while 13 villagers were wounded in Israeli bombardment of Safad Al Batikh last month. The movie, which has been showing in cinemas across Lebanon for several weeks, is heavily censored and parts of the dialogue, such as when the hero announces that he is Jewish, are not translated in the Arabic subtitles.

Ross will resume Hebron mediation tomorrow — Israel

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — U.S. Middle East envoy Dennis Ross will return to the region Wednesday to help finalise a deal between Israelis and Palestinians on Israel's long-delayed troop withdrawal from Hebron, Israel army radio reported Monday. The radio, citing unnamed Israeli officials, said secret high-level contacts were continuing Monday between Israeli and Palestinian negotiators in a bid to hammer out a deal on Hebron before Mr. Ross' return. Mr. Ross broke off a marathon three-week mediation effort a week ago after the negotiations deadlocked over Israeli demands for changes to the agreed blueprint for a transfer of power in Hebron as laid out in the 1995 Oslo peace accords. Palestinian officials said earlier Monday that face-to-face negotiations on the Hebron withdrawal had been suspended since Thursday. Israel "stopped the talks because they are waiting for the return of Dennis Ross," negotiator Hassan Asfour said. But Israeli army radio said the negotiations were continuing by telephone, notably between Mahmoud Abbas, Yasser Arafat's top deputy, Israeli army Chief Amnon Shahak and Yitzhak Molkho, a personal adviser to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Mr. Ross said last week that he could not return to the region until after Tuesday's U.S. presidential election. Both Israelis and Palestinians have said that many key issues on the Hebron pullout had been resolved, notably concerning the transfer of civilian powers to Mr. Arafat's self-rule government. The main outstanding differences concern Israeli demands for its troops to retain a right of hot pursuit into Palestinian areas in the event that anti-Israeli attacks are carried out or suspected. Israel has said the two sides were on the verge of resolving these final issues but that Mr. Arafat prevented a deal in the hope that international pressure would force Israel to back off some of its demands. "Negotiations with the Palestinians are still blocked. But they could be finished soon if only Yasser Arafat wants it," Foreign Minister David Levy told Israel radio. Palestinians want assurances that once a compromise on Hebron is reached, the Netanyahu government will move forwards on other unimplemented elements of Oslo. These include releasing Palestinian prisoners, creating safe-passage corridors between self-rule areas in the Gaza Strip and West Bank, authorising the opening of an Palestinian airport in Gaza and an Israeli army redeployment from West Bank rural areas. The Israeli and Palestinian tourism ministers agreed Monday for the first time to cooperate in encouraging tourism, particularly visits by pilgrims to holy places. Israel's Moshe Katzan and Palestinian Elias Freij announced the creation of joint working groups for tourism after their first meeting, held in Jerusalem. "Tourism is a source of revenue for the Israelis as well as the Palestinians, therefore we must encourage it by putting aside our political differences," Mr. Freij told journalists. Mr. Katzan praised the cooperation agreement, adding that he would visit Bethlehem, where Mr. Freij is mayor, during the next month. Israeli undercover soldiers abducted and briefly held two Palestinian boys from the West Bank village of Husein, where a Jewish settler allegedly killed a boy a week ago, Palestinians said on Monday. They said Maza Shusha, 14, and Alaa Al Oul, 14, were kidnapped near their homes on Sunday. "The two boys were kidnapped by Israeli undercover units driving a Ford car with Palestinian number plates," said a member of one of the boys' families, who spoke on condition he not be identified. "The Palestinian liaison committee was informed of the abduction, and after lengthy talks with the Israeli liaison committee, the two boys were returned at one a.m. on Monday (2300 GMT on Sunday)," he said.



Israelis at work putting up concrete blocks in front of a police station near the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron ahead of a possible deployment in the West Bank town (Reuters photo)

PNA requests Jordan to continue its role in Arab East Jerusalem

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter
AMMAN — The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) on Monday requested Jordan to continue to retain its guardianship of the Islamic holy places in Arab East Jerusalem until the final status of the Holy City and the Kingdom accepted the request, a PNA official said. Earlier in the day, Information Minister Marwan Muasher affirmed that Jordan and the PNA had no differences over the issue of Jerusalem and the talks that a visiting PNA delegation was holding with Jordanian officials were of a technical nature related to the administration and maintenance of the Islamic shrines in Arab East Jerusalem. The request that Jordan continue its role vis-a-vis the shrines was made during a meeting between Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti and the PNA delegation. Talks during the meeting focused on the situation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in the light of the recent developments in the Middle East and the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian negotiations over the redeployment of Israeli forces in the West Bank town of Hebron, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said. Following the meeting, the head of the Palestine delegation Al Tayeh Abdul Rahim, secretary-general of the PNA and a close confidant of Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, told Jordan Television: "We have briefed the prime minister on current talks on reaching an agreement on the Hebron redeployment issue and we have conveyed the Palestinian leadership's appreciation of Jordan's continued support for us to secure the implementation of the agreements we signed with the Israelis." "We have also urged Jordan to maintain its present role as our partners and not as mediators," said Mr. Abdul Rahim, who served as the Palestinian ambassador to Jordan before moving to Gaza to serve with the PNA. "We have discussed the situation in Jerusalem, which is exposed to an Israeli onslaught, starting from the (Sept. 23) opening of the tunnel entrance and Israel's plans to encroach on our shrines at Al Aqsa Mosque within the walled city. "We received completely positive response from Jordan. We are keen on the Jordanian role and support for our efforts to protect the holy sites. And we need this Jordanian role to last throughout the interim period until a final solution has been reached on Jerusalem," said Mr. Abdul Rahim. That was a reference to the Kingdom's role as the guardian of the Islamic shrines in Arab East Jerusalem. Despite its decision to sever legal and administrative links with the West Bank in 1988, Jordan has maintained this role. The Palestinians had objected to a provision in the 1994 Washington Declaration in which Israel recognised Jordan's "special role" vis-a-vis the shrines. The Jordanian-Palestinian rift was healed when the Kingdom explained that the "special role" was of a religious nature and that the political status of Arab East Jerusalem was an issue that (Continued on page 7)

Assad: Israeli attack on Syria cannot be ruled out

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — Syrian President Hafez Al Assad on Monday again raised the spectre of an Israeli attack against Syria or Lebanon, while at the same time urging the Jewish state to honour all accords — "whether signed or not." The Syrian leader told Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak during talks here that "nobody can say it (an Israeli attack) will not take place or that such a possibility does not exist." Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy said on Monday Israel had no intention of attacking Syria. "Israel has said time and again, through the various channels and also in public that it has no intention of attacking Syria," Mr. Levy told Israel Radio. "On the contrary it (Israel) is interested in reducing the level of tension and creating an atmosphere conducive to renewing peace talks," Mr. Levy told the radio. Mr. Levy said Israel's intentions towards Syria were peaceful. Peace talks between the two countries were suspended eight months ago. Tension has been running high between the longtime arch-enemies since Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu took power in June. Mr. Assad said Israel had started talking about a military escalation after Syrian

King, Assad exchange views

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein on Monday had a phone call with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad during which the two leaders discussed bilateral relations and ways to enhance them, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said. It said the two leaders also discussed the latest developments in the Middle East peace process as well as regional and international developments. The Syrians are insisting negotiations should restart at the point where they were broken off by the previous Labour government in Israel, a point reiterated by Mr. Assad in the talks with Mr. Mubarak, said MENA. The Syrian leader said in September that former Israeli Premier Shimon Peres had given a verbal agreement to withdraw from the Golan, insisting it was an "accord" that should be implemented. "When two parties agree on something, it is considered as an accord in as much as there is an international sponsorship of the peace process and the two co-sponsors (Russia and the United States) were there," he said. "We must not talk of signed and unsigned accords as we are not talking about a conflict between two people put before a common law tribunal... we are talking about peace and there is no room for word play here," Mr. Assad said. (Continued on page 7)

U.S. reports new missile attack on Iraqi defences

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — A U.S. F-16 fighter fired a new anti-radar missile at an Iraqi mobile surface-to-air missile system Monday on the eve of U.S. presidential elections, a Pentagon spokesman said. Iraq's official news agency INA immediately denied the Pentagon report. The agency quoted a foreign ministry source as saying the U.S. report was "baseless." It was the second such incident in three days, putting U.S. resolve to the test at a time when President Clinton was absorbed by the final day of his campaign for reelection. The F-16 received indications he was being targeted, but further evaluation did not confirm that Iraqi radar had locked onto the U.S. fighter, the Pentagon said. If confirmed, the attempt to target U.S. warplanes enforcing a no-fly zone south of the 33rd Parallel would pose a direct challenge to Washington as Americans were about to go to the polls. White House spokesman Mike McCurry said President Clinton was briefed on the incident and analysts were trying to "determine why we've had a second incident." A Pentagon review of the missile firing on Saturday found that there apparently was no attempt to target the plane. The pilot's cockpit instruments had indicated he was being targeted Saturday by Iraqi radar, and under the rules of engagement he was allowed to respond to what he perceived as a hostile act, the Pentagon said. "Subsequent analysis did not support the initial indications of radar activity," the Pentagon said in a statement. It did not say what damage was done by the missile, noting that it was still being assessed. The incident occurred at 0900 GMT about 40 kilometres from where a similar incident occurred Saturday. In that incident, an F-16 fired a missile after receiving

Rifkind proposes OSCE for Mideast

ABU DHABI (AFP) — British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind said Monday he will propose the setting up of a Middle East body to resolve regional conflicts, like the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Mr. Rifkind arrived in Abu Dhabi on the third leg of a regional tour and was greeted by his United Arab Emirates (UAE) counterpart Rashed Abdullah Al Nouami. The official news agency WAM said the foreign secretary would discuss the Middle East peace process and the situation in the Gulf during his two-day visit to the UAE. Mr. Rifkind told the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in a telephone interview earlier Monday that he would put forward his proposal for a regional security body in the UAE capital. "I'm going to, in my speech in Abu Dhabi, call for an organisation for dialogue on economic issues on security and political matters," he said. The organisation would not act "as an alternative to the Middle East peace process, that would be absurd and undesirable," Mr. Rifkind said, adding that the initial response in the region about the idea had been "quite positive." "Although the OSCE did not resolve the cold war it provided a forum for dialogue which meant that people who still had very strong differences were able to get together on a regular, constant basis without sacrificing the principles to discuss how they could take matters forward," Mr. Rifkind said. The foreign secretary, who visited Israel and the Palestinian self-rule territories before Abu Dhabi, suggested that Turkey and Iran should be part of such an organisation. Mr. Rifkind on Sunday pressed Israel to carry out its long-delayed troop withdrawal from Hebron, backing up his call with a surprise visit to Palestinian leaders in the volatile West Bank city. Britain "believes all the Jewish settlements in the occupied territories are illegal and therefore should not continue," he added.

S. Arabia says it worked fully with FBI on bombing

Iran denies any link with blast, says report aims to split Muslims

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Faisal said his government has cooperated fully with the United States in the investigation of a lethal anti-U.S. bombing in the kingdom, according to a report Monday.

In an interview with the New York Times, the prince said partnership with the Americans had been "excellent" on the investigation of the June 25 bombing of a U.S. military facility in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. The attack killed 19 Americans.

"The incident was in Saudi Arabia, and therefore we feel responsible," the prince told the paper.

"The loss of life of American life is not something we take lightly. It is the responsibility of the government of Saudi Arabia to bring them to justice, and in this regard we are cooperating very closely with the American agencies, as they are cooperating very closely with ours," he added.

The Times reported Saturday that the lack of communication with the Saudis had compelled Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Director Louis Freeh to halt the deployment of FBI replacement teams to Saudi Arabia.

The paper reported that over 70 agents were sent to the scene after the blast but that number had dwindled to fewer than a dozen.

The story prompted the agency to issue a statement saying "reports that the FBI is withdrawing its agents out of Saudi Arabia because of dissatisfaction with the level of cooperation by the Saudi government are not true."

Iran said meanwhile, allegations of an Iranian role in the June bombing in Saudi Arabia aimed to sow discord among Muslims in the Gulf region.

The official Iranian news agency IRNA quoted foreign ministry spokesman Mahmoud Mohammadi as saying on Sunday that the Washington post report was "a new U.S. conspiracy to create internal conflict in Islamic-Arabic countries."

"He once again rejected any links between Iran and the explosion in Dhahran," said IRNA, monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). It said Mr. Mohammadi described the report as baseless.

Quoting unnamed sources close to the investigation, the post said on Friday Saudi security officials were holding some 40 Saudi citizens for alleged involvement in the attack. The report said Saudi Arabia was convinced the attack was part of a broad conspiracy backed by Iran.

It said the Saudi govern-

ment had obtained confessions from some of those arrested and other evidence implicating Iran as the instigator and sponsor of the attack.

U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry said later that the U.S. has not found a culprit for the bombing. Asked about an alleged Iranian link, he said: "We have reached no conclusions about who was responsible for this."

Saudi officials have refused to comment on the report. The Washington Post said that some of the suspects belonged to a shadowy pro-Iranian group called the Saudi Hizbollah.

In a statement sent to the Associated Press in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, Hizbollah denied any involvement in the blast, and said it had been "subjected to a wave of arrests that includes the (group's) entire leadership."

The statement predicted that authorities might try to pin the blame for the bombing on Hizbollah members. Other sources stressed that the government was focusing on the Shiites and Iran but that majority Sunni Muslims were also among the hundreds of suspects.

Saudi Arabia, facing home-grown opposition from among Sunni Muslim activists opposed to the kingdom's close ties to the West and critical of alleged widespread corruption.

The Saudi government has said little about their activities.

The Hizbollah claimed that authorities were trying to blame the blast on the Shiites in order to "exterminate" a minority that has long been regarded with suspicion by the stalwartly Sunni Muslim leadership. Besides the 19 Americans killed, scores were injured in last June's bombing, the second such attack to target a U.S. military installation in Saudi Arabia in seven months.

In November last year, an explosion outside a U.S.-run military training facility in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, killed five Americans and two Indians. Four Saudi men were later convicted and beheaded for carrying out the bombing.

Saudi security sources and Shiite Muslim dissidents told the AP on Saturday that dozens of Shiite suspects detained for the Dhahran bombing belonged to Hizbollah.

Hizbollah has links with the Lebanon-based Iranian-backed group of the same name, as well as connections with Syria, said the sources, speaking on condition of anonymity.



BEIRUT MARKET: A camel and a horse eat garbage near a vegetable market at the entrance of Beirut's Palestinian refugee camp Shatila on Monday. Many people bring in their animals from rural areas to earn some extra money by using them for transportation and in local fairs (Reuters photo)

Arab ministers aim to fight terrorism but define it first

JEDDAH (AFP) — Arab interior ministers are trying to agree on a definition of terrorism in order to fight the scourge, Saudi Interior Minister Prince Nayef Ben Abdul Aziz said Monday.

Prince Nayef told the official Saudi Press Agency (SPA) that he hoped Arab interior ministers would agree on a formula to "define terrorism and fight it" during their next meeting early next year.

A committee formed by Arab interior ministers has already drafted a study on defining terrorism, said Prince Nayef who believes Palestinians and other people fighting for their rights should not be described as terrorists.

"We must reach an objective and correct definition of terrorism, so we don't indiscriminately label people or groups as terrorists, because there are people and states in the world which are oppressed and are trying to obtain their rights," he said.

"Palestinians, Kashmiris, Bosnians, and all the sons of peoples who live under oppression and occupation and are striving to obtain their national rights must not be described as terrorists," Prince Nayef said.

The Saudi minister paid tribute to a Saudi officer who was killed Thursday in a gunfight between an anti-drug squad and a band of 30 drug traffickers in Jeddah, during which a drug trafficker was also killed.

A total of 24 Americans and two Indians have been killed in the bombings of U.S. military installations in Saudi Arabia since last year. Both bombings were claimed by militants demanding the departure of U.S. troops.

Four Saudis were beheaded in May for a car bombing in Riyadh in November last year.

Reference to Eve as sexual 'bombshell' sparks Israeli furor

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Ultra-orthodox Jews were up in arms Monday over a comedy programme on state radio and television which this week referred to Eve, the biblical mother of humanity, as a sexual "bombshell."

"We must not tolerate such profanation of the Bible, it is insulting to believers," declared Shlomo Beizer, a deputy minister of health from the ultra-orthodox Shas Party.

"Under the guise of satire, the radio is waging a veritable cultural war against religion," said Mr. Beizer, who demanded that the government immediately cancel the offending programme.

The official, whose party is the second biggest member of the governing coalition after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud bloc, threatened to submit a censure motion in parliament if the government does not act.

He also threatened to take court action against the programme's host, Gil Koppel.

In his programme, Mr. Koppel comments in his manner on whatever chapter from the Old Testament is being read that week in synagogues.

His programme has been broadcast on state television for several weeks at the start of the Jewish Sabbath on Friday night. But it had not been heard by ultra-orthodox Jews who are forbidden from watching television on the Sabbath, until Israel's state radio began rebroadcasting the programme this week on Sunday morning.

In a recent commentary on Genesis, Mr. Koppel referred to Eve as a "sexual bombshell" and last Friday drew a parallel between Abraham's near-sacrifice of his son in the healing death last week of a 10-year-old Palestinian boy by a Jewish settler.

"It's a very funny programme, but it's clear you can't please everyone," commented dryly the director of public radio and television, Moti Kirshenbaum.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Clinton remembers Yitzhak Rabin

UNION New Jersey (AFP) — President Bill Clinton on Sunday remembered the late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on the eve of the one-year anniversary of his assassination. Mr. Clinton mentioned Rabin on two campaign stops Sunday in Florida. "One year ago tomorrow (Monday), a great prime minister of Israel was murdered by someone in his own country who hated, hated the cause of peace more than he respected the human life of his nation's great leader," Mr. Clinton said in West Palm Beach. Rabin was gunned down Nov. 4, 1995 by a right wing Jewish fanatic who opposed Israel's peace talks with Palestinians.

Saudi firms urged to ignore Israeli faxes

RIYADH (AFP) — The authorities have urged Saudi firms to ignore a flood of faxes and letters from Israeli companies proposing to trade with them, a Saudi newspaper reported on Monday. Al-Iqtisadiya newspaper said many Saudi firms based in Riyadh, Jeddah and on the Gulf coast have been contacted by Israeli firms publicising Israeli goods or asking for details about Saudi products. The economic newspaper said most faxes and letters are sent by the Israeli exports office in Tel Aviv, but others are sent from Europe, the United States or Jordan. The commerce ministry called Saudi firms and businessmen to tell them to ignore the messages and "accord them no interest," the paper said. The ministry "is strictly opposed to the private sector having any involvement with Israeli products." Saudi Arabia is opposed to any normalisation with Israel until a comprehensive Middle East peace settlement is reached.

Israeli system to be used on U.S. aircraft

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The U.S. Army has chosen an Israeli-developed laser targeting system for use on its new Comanche stealth combat helicopter, the company which built the system said Monday. The laser system, manufactured by the Israeli defense firm ELOP, provides new ranging and target designation possibilities for the helicopter using a newly developed "diode-pumped" laser technology. ELOP executives said, "The laser system for range-finding and target designation plays an important and central role in the helicopter's targeting navigation system," said ELOP President Jacob Toren. The system includes eye protection equipment to keep helicopter pilots from being blinded by the diode-pumped laser beams, which are far more powerful than conventional models, ELOP officials said.

Saudi preachers pray for rain

RIYADH (AFP) — Preachers in the holy cities of Mecca and Medina on Monday prayed for rain in the deserts of Saudi Arabia, saying Muslims could help end drought by showing their devotion to God. "One reason preventing rain from falling is the fact that Muslims forget to obey God, accumulate sins, and don't do their prayers," said the imam of the grand mosque of Mecca, Sheikh Abdul Rahman Al Sudais. Sheikh Abdullah Al Zakham, imam of the mosque of Medina, Islam's second holiest site after Mecca, said sin was one cause of drought and urged Muslims to pray for God's forgiveness, the official Saudi press agency reported. The prayers in Mecca, Medina and cities across Saudi Arabia are held when the rainy season is late in coming.

Turkish forces begin Cyprus war games

NICOSIA (R) — Turkish and Turkish Cypriot forces began four days of joint military manoeuvres on and around northern Cyprus on Monday. Turkish Cypriot defence officials said. Around 30,000 troops as well as tanks, ships and planes will take part in the exercises in the self-proclaimed Turkish republic of northern Cyprus and the waters of the eastern Mediterranean. Live ammunition will be used, they said. The war games are held annually but Turkish Cypriot officials said they would be bigger this year in response to joint Greek and Cypriot manoeuvres on the Greek-Cypriot, government-controlled part of the island in October.

Turkey's government wins mini-polls

ANKARA (R) — Turkey's Islamist-led coalition passed its first electoral test since its formation in June, doing well at mini local elections in 12 municipalities at the weekend. Anatolian news agency said on Monday. Islamist Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan's Welfare Party won 30.4 per cent of the 85,000 votes at Sunday's polls, up narrowly from the 30 per cent it garnered in the same wards at general elections last December. Most of the votes cast were in the southern area of Osmangazi, recently upgraded by the government to a province in a nod to local pride. The coalition partner True Path Party (DYP) of conservative Tansu Ciller defied pollster predictions that it would suffer from its alliance with the Islamists. The DYP won 26 per cent of the votes on Sunday, eight percentage points more than its December total in the same districts. The conservative main opposition Motherland Party (ANAP) came in a poor fifth, place on 8.5 per cent, a fall of 10 percentage points. Mr. Erbakan, modern Turkey's first Islamist premier, comfortably survived an opposition censure motion against him last month for a disastrous trip to Libya.

Lebanese mediator urges Bahrain to spare Shiites on death row

BEIRUT (AFP) — The head of Lebanon's Shiite Muslim community, Sheikh Mohammad Mehdi Shamseddin, urged Bahrain's ruler on Monday to spare the lives of three Shiite convicts awaiting execution for a deadly fire-bombing.

"I exhort the Emir of Bahrain, Sheikh Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa, to prevent the executions and not to ratify the verdict because that would only worsen the situation in an unexpected manner," said Sheikh Shamseddin.

The head of the supreme Islamic Council for Lebanon's Shiites told Beirut newspapers he was disappointed by the decision to let a mediator intervene between the Bahraini government and Shiite opposition.

He called on Sheikh Isa to review "details of the court case on which the judgement was based and which were not fair."

On Thursday, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch also called on the Bahraini leadership to grant reprieves to the three Shiites sentenced to death for a July 1 fire-bomb attack on a restaurant that killed seven Bangladeshis.

"The crime for which these men were convicted is indeed a heinous one, but, according to information we have obtained, this trial did not meet minimal standards of fairness," the two groups said in a joint letter.

An appeal has already been turned down, leaving a reprieve as the only hope for Ali Ahmad Abdul Usfur, Yusuf Hussein Abdul Al Bani and Ahmad Khalil Ibrahim Kattab.

Political unrest erupted in Bahrain in December 1994 after the expulsion of Shiite cleric Ali Salman who led a movement to restore an elected parliament. Since then, at least 25 people have died.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

- 14:05.....Budgie
- 14:25.....Oscar's Orchestra
- 14:40.....Comedy — I Love Lucy
- 15:00.....Sciences Cartoon
- 15:15.....Magazine — Montage
- 16:00.....At The Zoo
- 16:30.....My Secret Identity
- 17:00.....News Flash
- 17:01.....Fun With Physics
- 17:15.....Road To Avonlea
- 18:00 Serie — La Lumiere des Jusies
- 19:00.....Le Journal
- 19:15 Magazine — Extra Large
- 19:30.....News Headlines
- 19:35.....Murphy Brown
- 20:00.....Magazine — Zero One
- 20:30.....Encounter
- 21:10.....Star Trek
- 22:00.....News in English
- 22:25.....China Beach
- 23:15.....Mission Impossible
- 23:59.....Are You Being Served?

PRAYER TIMES

- 04:32.....Fajr
- 05:51.....(Sunrise) Duha
- 11:19.....Dhuhr
- 14:21.....Asr
- 16:48.....Maghreb
- 18:06.....Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweith, Tel. 810740

Assemblies of God Church

Tel. 632785

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366

Anglican Church Tel. 652826

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Armenian International Church Tel. 652526

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457

The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Temperatures are expected to

drop, humidity to rise, and clouds to appear at high altitudes. There will be a chance for scattered showers with winds westerly to northwesterly moderate to active in Amman, it will be dusty, skies partly cloudy, and winds northerly moderate to active.

Amman 10/20

Aqaba 15/28

Deserts 17/22

Jordan Valley 15/29

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 25, Aqaba 30 Humidity readings: Amman 27 per cent, Aqaba 42 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Mukhlis Mazharab 820425

Dr. Wissam Hziyin 748563

Dr. Abdul Hadi Tayyin 620115

Dr. Munther Al Qatani 779189

Ferdous pharmacy 778336

Al Assema pharmacy 637055

Al Salam pharmacy 636730

Yacoub pharmacy 644945

Shamsat pharmacy 637661

Nairoukh pharmacy 623672

Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:

Dr. Ghazi Ta'anneh 250801

Al Quds pharmacy 1-1

ZARQA:

Dr. Ziyad Jghalim 922991

Khalifah pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Dept 661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199 637777

Rescue Police 192 621111

Fire Brigade 617101

Blood Bank 775121

Highway Police 843402

Traffic Police 896300

Public Security Department 630321

Hotel Complaints 695800

Price Complaints 661176

Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467

Amman Municipality Complaints 787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121

Overseas Calls 010230

Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101

Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101

Jordan Television 773111

Jordan Jordan 774111

Water Authority 680100

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Company 636781

RJ Flight Information 08-53201

Queen Alia Intl. Airport (08-53201)

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Hussien Medical Centre 81381332

Khalil Maternity 644281/6

Jabal Amman Maternity 642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity 642362

Muhsin J. Atunian 636140

Palestine, Shamsat 660171

Shamsat Hospital 669131

University Hospital 845845

Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9

The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 77101/3

Al-Bashir 775111/26

Army, Marka 891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital 802240/50

Amal Hospital 674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 885199

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)883323

Zarqa National Hospital (09)800560

The Sinus Hospital (09)86732

Al Henna Modern Hospital (09)990900

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA AIRPORT

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

05:45.....Marka, Aqaba (add) (RJ)

06:20.....Beirut (RJ)

08:30.....Amsterdam, New York (RJ)

11:05.....Amsterdam, Montreal, Toronto (RJ)

11:15.....Vienna, Brussels (RJ)

12:00.....Geneva, Madrid (RJ)

12:10.....Paris (RJ)

12:15.....Larvik (RJ)

12:30.....Cairo (RJ)

12:30.....Frankfurt (RJ)

12:30.....Lanana (RJ)

12:30.....Jeddah (RJ)

20:40.....Damascus (RJ)

21:00.....Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)

22:00.....Kuala Lumpur, Singapore (RJ)

Other Flights

Clinton, Dole enter final day of campaigning

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton and Republican challenger Bob Dole continued their frenzied last-minute campaigning on the final day before voters decide who will lead the country for the next four years.

Most polls showed Mr. Clinton with a shrinking but solid lead, while Republicans seemed increasingly likely to maintain control of both houses of Congress,

potentially leaving Mr. Clinton with a clouded mandate for his second term.

Sen. Dole took a six-hour break from his unprecedented 96-hour around-the-clock campaign blitz Sunday to nap and clean up, then continued his relentless attack on White House ethics and asked Ross Perot's supporters for their votes.

Addressing a rally of some 4,000 supporters in

this city east of Los Angeles, Sen. Dole said Americans would show character mattered in the election.

"We are going to prevail because the American people have had enough," he said. "They've had enough and they're going to make a change."

Mr. Clinton, casting himself as the voice of centrist reason and sounding very presidential, appealed to voters to seek "common ground" and heal the racial, religious and cultural divisions tearing apart the country.

"We will never be what we ought to be if we allow our country to be led by those who believe we are better off on our own, and who seek to pursue that path by driving wedges between us and exploiting our fears and convincing us that our brothers and sisters of different races, different faiths, different walks of life, are our inherent enemies," he said.

"That is a prescription for disaster," he told St. Paul's African Episcopal Methodist Church in Tampa, Florida, where civil rights leader Martin Luther King once preached.

The Dole campaign, energised by poll data showing Mr. Clinton's edge narrowing after weeks of double-digit leads, continued hammering away at Mr. Clinton's ethics to woo undecided voters away from the Democrats.

The Reuters daily tracking poll showed Sen. Dole within four percentage points of Mr. Clinton. ABC had the president 11 points ahead and Gallup put the president's lead at 13 points.

Individual state polls gave



President Clinton addresses a crowd gathered for a campaign rally at the West Palm Beach International Airport Sunday. Mr. Clinton has two more full days of campaigning before the presidential election is held Tuesday (Reuters photo)

Sen. Dole some reason for hope. He was running even with Mr. Clinton in Georgia and Tennessee, within five points in the key state of Ohio and led Mr. Clinton in Nevada — all states Mr. Clinton carried in 1992.

Republicans also pulled ahead in the Reuters poll in the battle for Congress. The Republicans won control of both the House of Representatives and the Senate in 1994 for the first time in 40 years. This year, they have been targets of an all-out assault by Democrats and their labour union allies.

But two new polls

released Sunday showed Sen. Dole's focus on the character issue has failed to change voters' minds.

The latest Harris poll showed that by 45 per cent to 39 per cent voters tend to see Sen. Dole as more honest and trustworthy than Mr. Clinton, but two weeks ago, he had a wider lead of 44 per cent to Mr. Clinton's 34 per cent.

The poll of 1,029 likely voters conducted on Nov. 1-3 also gave Mr. Clinton an overwhelming lead on most major policy issues, including the environment, jobs, health care and

the economy. The margin of error was three percentage points.

A separate poll by the Pew Research Centre of 1,211 likely voters conducted on Oct. 31 through Nov. 3, found Mr. Clinton leading Sen. Dole by 49 per cent to 36 per cent, with Mr. Perot grabbing eight per cent and six per cent undecided.

Potential damage from the campaign finance controversies digging the Democrats in recent weeks appeared to be less than expected, the Pew pollsters said.

Fifty-six per cent of the

likely voters said they had closely followed news of improper campaign contributions to the Democratic National Committee, but only seven per cent of Mr. Clinton backers said the charges raised serious doubts in their minds about voting for the president.

Additionally, the poll showed that Sen. Dole had the support of only 75 per cent of those self-identifying as Republicans, compared to 85 per cent of the Democrats supporting Mr. Clinton.

The sampling error was three percentage points.

New Ulster police chief rules out early IRA truce

BELFAST (R) — Northern Ireland's new police chief warned Britons Monday to expect further IRA guerrilla attacks and ruled out any immediate prospect of a new ceasefire.

Ronnie Flanagan, who took over as head of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, predicted further headline-grabbing bomb attacks on prestige targets by Republican guerrillas in Northern Ireland and mainland Britain.

The British government has denied Dublin press reports it was negotiating terms of a pre-Christmas IRA ceasefire with Gerry Adams, head of the guerrillas' political wing Sinn Féin.

"We have nothing to suggest an imminent restoration of the IRA ceasefire," he told the BBC on his first day as chief constable. "I sadly expect there will be further attacks both here in the province and on the mainland."

Chief Flanagan said the Irish Republican Army (IRA) was debating its next step in a 27-year war against British rule of Northern Ireland but he was pessimistic it would restore a 17-month ceasefire ended in February.

He said the guerrillas may have held a recent policy meeting but could not confirm media reports that the IRA's top general army com-

vention had been in session. "There is undoubtedly an internal debate going on within the Republican movement. But we have nothing, as a result of what took place, to suggest a restoration of the cessation of violence is imminent."

He said he feared more IRA "spectaculars" on major targets such as the twin car bomb assault at Britain's Northern Ireland army base on Oct. 7 which killed one soldier and injured 20.

"I think it's fair to say that they will be seeking targets of high impact — targets that will grab the headlines," he said.

Chief Flanagan took over amid reports that Irish nationalist leader John Hume had been in touch with Mr. Adams over a new IRA truce.

Mr. Hume, leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) and Mr. Adams were architects of 1993 peace proposals to end the conflict by getting all sides to peace talks.

Their proposals were never published but Irish diplomats said some of their suggestions were incorporated into an Anglo-Irish initiative called the Downing Street Declaration which was unveiled in December 1993.

Mr. Hume, whose SDLP is taking part in Belfast peace talks, said he was keeping the British and Irish

governments, which are joint sponsors of the negotiations, informed of his talks.

"I have made publicly clear that I have maintained my contact with Gerry Adams, and as a public representative, obviously I talk regularly to the government," he told the BBC.

But he denied weekend newspaper reports that he was a go-between for Adams whose party is shunned by the British and Irish governments because of continued IRA violence.

The two governments banned ministerial-level talks with Sinn Féin when the IRA ended its truce in February with a series of attacks in Britain and the bombing of an army base in Germany.

Sinn Féin is also barred from the Belfast peace talks and can only join when a new IRA ceasefire is called, the two governments say.

British officials insist that there must be an initial verification period to ensure that the truce is genuine and Hume said the truce that he sought was "for keeps."

But the IRA has demanded that Britain and Ireland drop any attempt to make a surrender of weapons a talks priority and give the negotiations a strict time frame, something vigorously opposed by Protestant pro-British unionists at the talks.

Manila urges squeeze on Asian drug barons

MANILA (R) — Philippine President Fidel Ramos urged governments Monday to tighten laws against money laundering in order to help win the war against drugs in Asia.

He said drug syndicates had become so powerful they could now defy sovereign governments and control vulnerable economies.

Mr. Ramos was speaking at the opening of a United Nations-sponsored meeting of heads of anti-narcotics agencies from about 50 countries to discuss how to combat the drugs menace in the Asia-Pacific region.

Preventing money laundering was "a challenge to all countries, developed and developing, but more so to fragile and vulnerable economies which can easily come under economic and political pressure, or even the control of criminal groups," Mr. Ramos told the meeting in Manila.

"Drug traffickers must understand that we mean business," he said.

Mr. Ramos said an international crackdown on money launderers would "hit drug traffickers where it would hurt them hardest."

He was referring to efforts by drug syndicates to disguise the source of their wealth by channelling funds through legitimate business fronts or by trying to bury them in the global banking network.

Mr. Ramos called for tighter laws that would enable governments to seize all proceeds derived from drug trafficking and punish not only the traffickers "but also those involved in facilitating the making or handling of profits derived from drugs."

He said drugs had also spawned other crimes, including bribery of officials, violation of banking laws, and on a political level, transnational terrorism and insurgency.

Bomb hits French post office before Spain summit

MARSEILLE, France (R) — A bomb badly damaged the main post office in the southern French town of Aix-en-Provence early Monday, a few hours before a top level Franco-Spanish meeting was to open in nearby Marseille.

Police said no one had claimed responsibility for the attack which caused no injuries.

Radio reports pointed the finger of suspicion at Corsican separatists who recently bombed the mayor's office of Prime Minister Alain Juppe in Bordeaux and law courts in Aix-en-Provence and the southern town of Nîmes.

Reports said the separatists may have sought to use the Franco-Spanish talks to highlight claims of independence for the Mediterranean island but struck in Aix-en-Provence, 30 kilometers north of Marseille, because security in Marseille itself was too tight.

Hundreds of police

mounted a major security operation in the Mediterranean port as French President Jacques Chirac and Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar, with top cabinet ministers, prepared to begin a two-day meeting later in the day.

Spain, and to a lesser degree France, face a violent campaign by Basque separatists. ETA (Basque Homeland and Freedom) guerrillas have killed hundreds of people in Spain. The small group Iparrerak (those of the north) has staged sporadic bomb attacks in France.

On Corsica, a bomb early Monday destroyed a private car belonging to a conservative senator in the village where he is mayor. No one was injured.

The attacks appeared to be part of a bombing campaign by the hardline separatist "Historic Wing" of the Corsican National Liberation Front (FLNC) against elected officials on

the island. The Paris government vowed a crackdown on the FLNC after it bombed Mr. Juppe's office in Bordeaux. Separatist movements have conducted a 20-year guerrilla campaign against central rule by authorities in Paris.

An opinion poll at the weekend said more than 40 per cent of French voters, exasperated by endless Corsican separatist violence, were ready to grant the turbulent island independence.

The poll, conducted for Canal Plus television, said 42 per cent of 990 people questioned would vote for Corsican independence with 30 per cent against. The remainder of those polled were uncommitted or offered no answer.

Another poll conducted last month in Corsica itself showed 91 per cent of the islanders opposed independence, seven per cent were in favour and two per cent had no opinion.

Bhutto rival takes over key state

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Within a day of being reinstated as head of the country's largest state, Manzoor Wattoo, a bitter rival of Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, sacked several officials and ordered detained students freed Monday.

Mr. Wattoo, who resumed office as chief minister of Punjab Sunday, 14 months after his dismissal by a presidential decree, vowed to fight "undemocratic" methods in the country.

The opposition leader, in his first press conference after the ruling by the Lahore High Court ordered his reinstatement, said he released students detained for protesting the privatisation of schools and colleges.

He also said he would fight nepotism by providing "jobs strictly on merit."

Mr. Wattoo was ousted in September 1995 after he fell out with Ms. Bhutto for allegedly ignoring her party's interests. Her ally, Anif Nakai, was elected in his place by the 248-member Punjab assembly.

After a year-long hearing, the Lahore High Court ruled that Nakai's election as chief minister on Sept. 13, 1995 was "unlawful," and ordered that Mr. Wattoo be returned to his post.

Mr. Wattoo's reinstatement at the head of the provincial government after the widely publicised falling out with Ms. Bhutto, sparked intense political manoeuvring in the Punjab, considered crucial for national stability.

Asif Ali Zardari, Ms. Bhutto's husband and also federal minister for investment, has been in the provincial capital, Lahore, for a week in an apparent bid to maintain

the ruling coalition's unity and defeat the political threat.

The People's Democratic Front (PDF) alliance led by the embattled Bhutto moved a no-trust motion against Mr. Wattoo soon after the court declared his September 1995 dismissal illegal.

Ms. Bhutto said the judgement was "acceptable" to her government but warned the Punjab assembly would decide Mr. Wattoo's future.

The verdict came with Ms. Bhutto locked in bitter confrontation with the opposition over her economic policies and with the Muslim fundamentalist Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) party leading nationwide street protests against her.

Ms. Bhutto is also under immense pressure over the deteriorating law and order situation in Punjab, sectarian killings and frequent bomb blasts.

Since April this year, nine explosions have rocked the politically-sensitive state, claiming more than 80 lives.

A bomb exploded aboard an express train near Sohawa town, 70 kilometres south of here Sunday, killing five passengers and injuring nine others.

No arrests have been made. Ms. Bhutto's security agencies are already facing sharp criticism over their failure to successfully probe earlier blasts.

In addition, Ms. Bhutto's estranged younger brother Murtaza died in a shootout between police and his guards in Karachi on Sept. 20.

Murtaza's family has blamed involvement of some government functionaries.

Japan, U.S. begin joint drills

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan and the United States began two-week joint military drills Monday, including the leadership of the infamous exercises in the Sea of Japan, amid growing tensions on the Korean peninsula.

Some 10,000 troops from Japan's ground, maritime and air self-defence forces are to take part in the drills, with 11 Japanese warships and 130 aircraft deployed, defence agency officials said.

From the U.S. side, 12,000 soldiers stationed in Japan are to participate, with 170 aircraft and six warships, including the aircraft carrier USS *Intrepid*, joining the drills, they said.

The drills, code-named "Keen Sword '97," coincided with joint military exercises between the United States and South Korea, which began Oct. 28 and will continue until Sunday.

"A series of ceremonies and meetings are scheduled for today ahead of full operations tomorrow," a Japanese military officer said.

It is the first time the U.S. aircraft carrier has been used in a joint drill with Japan in the Sea of Japan, which is surrounded by the Japanese archipelago, the Korean peninsula and the Russian far east.

The exercises followed the recent incursion by a North Korean submarine into the South, which fuelled tensions on the Korean peninsula.

They also come after reports that North Korea is preparing to test-fire a missile in the sea capable of reaching most parts of Japan.

Jiji press said Saturday the missile, that North Korea was believed to be preparing to test-fire might be a long-range ballistic missile called Taepo-Dong, not the medium-range Rodong-1 as earlier believed.

North Korea is said to be developing two types of Taepo-Dong missiles. The Taepo-Dong 1 has a range of more than 1,500 kilometres and can strike all parts of Japan. The Taepo-Dong 2, with a wider range of 4,000-6,000 kilometres, can reach parts of Alaska and Hawaii.

The Rodong-1 has a range of some 1,000 kilometres and can reach most parts of Japan. North Korea test-fired a Rodong-1 in the Sea of Japan in May 1993.

The exercises may draw opposition from North Korea, military sources told Kyodo news.

During the exercises, the two sides are to carry out their first practice in providing each other with military goods and services under a new agreement reached last month.

The so-called acquisition and cross-servicing agreement applies to peacetime joint exercises and U.N. peacekeeping operations but the pact would not apply to emergency situations.

Under the agreement, the two military forces are to share payment for goods and services, excluding ammunition, provided during joint drills and peacekeeping operations.

The agreement was part of recent efforts to build up bilateral security ties.

In April, Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto and U.S. President Bill Clinton issued a joint declaration calling for the two countries to co-operate in "areas surrounding Japan."

Some 100,000 U.S. military personnel are based in East Asia, including 47,000 in Japan.

Early Monday, some 3,500 residents staged a rally against the drills in Hijudai in Oita prefecture, western Japan, where Japan's ground self-defence forces are scheduled to carry out joint exercises, concentrating on transporting personnel between the two forces.

Former Central African Emperor dies

BANGUI (R) — Jean-Bedel Bokassa, former self-styled emperor of the Central African Republic, has died at the age of 75, closing a colourful and sometimes grim chapter in the diamond-rich yet impoverished nation's history.

One of Bokassa's sons, Jean Charles, announced the news early Monday. The flamboyant former leader, who had been ill with kidney, suspected cerebral and other problems, died of a heart attack Sunday night in the capital Bangui.

"Bokassa played a very important role for his country," opposition Patriotic Front for Progress leader

Abel Gombou told Reuters, adding that his "monarchic and dictatorial regime" had also caused a lot of harm.

Bokassa, whose rule was one of cruelty and extravagance punctuated by capricious decisions, seized power in 1966.

Modelling himself on his hero Napoleon Bonaparte of France, he crowned himself emperor in a ceremony in 1977. His crown alone was worth \$5 million and the ceremony reportedly swallowed a quarter of the country's annual foreign exchange earnings.

Ousted in a French-backed coup in 1979 while in Libya, he lived in exile in Ivory Coast and former

colonial power France.

In 1986 he suddenly returned to the Central African Republic, where he was sentenced to death in 1987 for murder and embezzlement after a trial coloured by accusations of infanticide and cannibalism.

The military leader at the time, Andre Kolingba, commuted Bokassa's sentence to life in prison and then freed him in 1993 at the height of a transition to multi-party democracy.

Bokassa remained convinced of his popularity with the masses until the end, harbouring hopes of being allowed to stage a comeback via presidential elections scheduled for 1999.

Khmer Rouge hit with more defections in Cambodia

PHNOM PENH (R) — A key Khmer Rouge division has agreed to join Cambodian government forces, adding to thousands of defections at the weekend and further splintering the dwindling guerrilla movement, officials said Monday.

About 300 fighters and 500 family members under the leadership of the infamous Khmer Rouge Commander Nuon Paet had agreed to join the government, General Keo Pong told Reuters.

Com. Nuon Paet, whose Division 405 is based in the southern province of Kampot, was believed to be behind the 1994 kidnapping and murder of Briton Mark Slater, Australian David Wilson and Frenchman Jean-Michel Braquet.

Gen. Keo Pong, a Khmer Rouge defector who has led negotiations on behalf of co-premier Hun Sen, said he did not yet know if Com. Nuon Paet himself would join the government, a move that analysts said would be sure to anger diplomats.

"Now, Nuon Paet is critically ill... and we don't know what he will do," Gen. Keo Pong said. "But he understands that he has no alternative but to send his troops and people to join the government."

The defection comes on the heels of Sunday's announcement that after weeks of negotiation, up to 4,000 Khmer Rouge dissidents loyal to breakaway leader Ieng Sary would join government forces in a ceremony on Nov. 6.

Up to 8,000 fighters and 50,000 family members from fronts 250 and 909 in the northeast and southwest also announced at the weekend they would join the government.

Cambodian officials said the defections were good news, but expressed concern that Ieng Sary, the number two to Pol Pot during the Khmer Rouge's "killing fields" regime from 1975 to 1979, had still not signed a formal peace agreement.

During those years the Khmer Rouge were held responsible for the deaths of more than a million Cambodians through execution, starvation, disease or overwork.

The Khmer Rouge signed a U.N.-sponsored peace pact with the Cambodian government in 1991, but later reneged on the deal and fought the ruling coalition formed after the 1993 elections.

The rebel movement began to lose steam in August, when Ieng Sary broke with Pol Pot's hardliners.

"This (the defections) is all moving very fast, but the problem that we have to keep watching is when the defectors wear government uniforms, are they fully integrated or are they going to maintain their own control," said member of parliament Son Chhay.

He expressed concern that co-premiers Hun Sen and Prince Norodom Ranariddh were recruiting defectors into their own camps separately, exacerbating rifts within the coalition government.

"We are playing a very dangerous game," he said.

MP Ahmad Yahya said it was up to the two prime ministers to resolve their differences.

"I think only Hun Sen and Ranariddh can solve the problem," he said. "I want to see (their parties) working very well for the sake of the Cambodian people."

Bulgaria's Socialists reel as opposition wins poll

SOFIA (R) — Opposition candidate Petar Stoyanov swept to a decisive victory in Bulgaria's presidential election in what newspapers hailed Monday as a powerful blow to the governing Socialist Party.

With most votes counted, official preliminary results gave the pro-reform lawyer of the anti-Communist Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) 60 per cent of the vote to Socialist Culture Minister Ivan Marazov's 40 per cent.

Although the president is a largely ceremonial figure with limited powers, the scale of Mr. Stoyanov's victory threw the government onto the defensive and Prime Minister Zhan Videnov, battling a deep economic crisis, promised to take note.

Mr. Videnov, in power for nearly two years, said Sunday a party congress could be held as early as January and did not rule out cabinet changes.

"Petar Stoyanov's crushing victory is the biggest blow for Zhan Videnov since he became prime minister. He has to resign," said the daily Standart in a front-page editorial.

"Bulgarians have decisively rejected a handful of incompetent officials who have pushed our country to the back of Europe's queue and have driven citizens to the bottom."

Mr. Videnov, often criticised for his secretive and authoritarian style of government, has presided over a big drop in living standards as Bulgaria struggles to meet huge foreign debt payments and kickstart its sluggish reform programme.

Romanian opposition, media hail anti-Communist victory

BUCHAREST (R) — Romania's anti-Communist opposition celebrated victory and prepared for power Monday, without waiting for the official results of Sunday's election.

The News media, relying on television exit polls, hailed the vote as a triumph for the opposition, which seems set for its first term in office in the Balkan country.

The exit polls indicated the Democratic Convention (CDR), a group of 15 parties led by academic Emil Constantinescu, triumphed in the parliamentary election over the scandal-hit ruling leftist party of President Ion Iliescu.

The presidential race, also held Sunday, seemed headed for a run-off between the two leaders.

Hundreds of opposition supporters poured into Bucharest's University Square in the small hours of the morning, tooting car horns, waving flags and shouting "victory, victory" and "Emil, Emil."

Newspapers described the vote as a victory for Mr. Constantinescu, without waiting for official results to confirm the exit polls.

Mr. Iliescu, an ex-Communist in power since the 1989 revolution that toppled dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, scored less than he expected in the presidential race and faces a second round of voting against an invigorated Mr. Constantinescu on Nov. 17.

"The democratic convention wins parliament comfortably, Mr. Iliescu and Mr. Constantinescu go shoulder to shoulder towards the runoff," said the independent Adevarul.

"We have defeated them," the partisan opposition newspaper Ziua said.

The central election bureau is due to start releasing



Emil Constantinescu, presidential candidate of the opposition Democratic Convention (CDR) bloc waves his hands to supporters at CDR headquarters Monday after exit polls showed him neck and neck with incumbent President Ion Iliescu in the race for president going to a run-off on Nov. 17 (Reuters photo)

official results later Monday. Final figures could take days.

But the margin of victory in the exit surveys suggest Romanians have voted decisively for change, finally rejecting ex-Communists in favour of centrist reformists promising relief from continuing poverty.

"I feel that if the real results confirm the exit polls, we will have four years of hard work in front of us to offer the country four years of a better life," said Mr. Constantinescu after the exit polls were released.

The CDR scored between 32 and 35 per cent of the vote in the exit polls to 22-25 per cent for Mr. Iliescu's party of Social Democracy (PDSR), which the opposition blames for timid reforms and economic decline.

The PDSR has run Romania, in one form or another, since the 1989 collapse of Communism.

Exit polls for the presidential race were split, with state television putting Mr. Iliescu three points ahead and two other surveys by private channels giving Mr. Constantinescu a thin edge.

Newspapers said the PDSR's failure to improve living conditions during seven years at the helm was the reason for their defeat.

"People voted not so much for one or other candidate as for a better life," said the daily Curierul National. "The immense majority of Romanians voted with their pockets."

The CDR will need the support of ex-prime minister Petre Roman's Social Democratic Union (USD) and an ethnic Hungarian party to form a coalition.

It faces the prospect of an uneasy "cohabitation" with Mr. Iliescu if the 66-year-old president wins a fresh term.

After exit polls were released a glum Mr. Iliescu called for the PDSR to be included in a governing coalition, a demand certain to be rejected by the CDR, but indicative of political tension ahead.

"A centre-right coalition (of the CDR and USD) might be just as unstable and just as fragile as the centre-left coalition which ruled over the past four years," said Mr. Iliescu.

Commentators noted the election outcome would amount to the first time since 1928 that Romania had undergone a peaceful transition of government through the ballot box.

"The election will be a big shock to Romanians," political analyst Bogdan Teodorescu told Reuters. "We will learn that there can be change without anyone being killed. People no longer in power don't go to jail. Their heads are not cut off."

Burma police detain democracy supporters

RANGOON (R) — Burmese authorities detained at least a dozen people after preventing them from attending a speech planned by democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, witnesses and a senior government official said Monday.

Witnesses said they saw several dozen people being forced into trucks by club-wielding riot police late Sunday afternoon after they had refused police requests to go home.

They did not know where the police took the detainees, but said they were "handcuffed and hit before being put on the trucks."

Several other democracy supporters were seen being picked up and then released in other streets near Ms. Suu Kyi's house.

But a senior government official told Reuters only 12 people had been temporarily detained for being loudly and chanting pro-democracy slogans in the street Sunday afternoon.

"The group was making noises and chanting," he said. "They picked up 12 people but I think by now they have already been released."

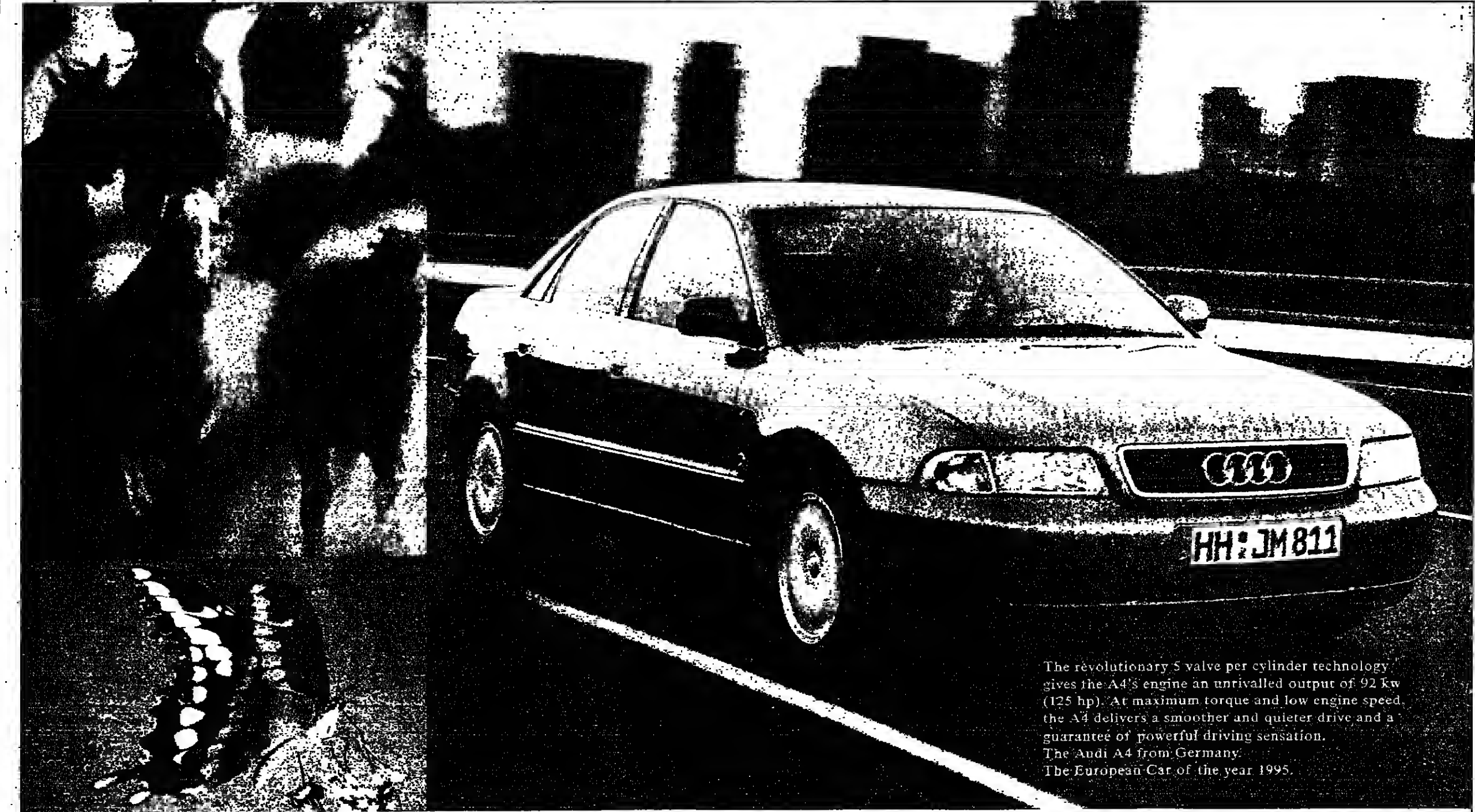
Ms. Suu Kyi was prevented from making her regular weekend speeches on the weekend when traffic police blocked vehicle and pedestrian access to her road.

It was the sixth weekend in a row that the ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) prevented the Nobel Peace laureate from giving speeches to supporters from the front gates of her University Avenue residence.

Groups of several hundred supporters gathered on different streets near Ms. Suu Kyi's house after being refused entry to University Avenue. In one area, chanting supporters broke off tree branches and grabbed sticks in case there was any confrontation with the police, witnesses said.

trian access to her road.

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Audi Advancement through technology

The economics of the Internet — too cheap to meter?

READ ABOUT the Internet, and thrill to the notion of a world wired at the speed of light, with all the information anyone could want just a mouse-click away. But actually use the Internet, and a more prosaic picture quickly emerges. Delay, breakdowns and glacial transmissions are part of everyday Internet life. New users are amazed: surely this rapid data trickle is not the fabled "information superhighway"? Veterans shake their head wearily: The Internet has always been swamped, and as long as it doubles in size each year, it seems likely always to remain so.

True? That question — whether the Internet can grow out of stumbling adolescence and become a reliable, delay-free and reliable as the telephone network — ultimately comes down to one of economics. Today's Internet works with a financial model that has hardly changed from the days, a decade ago, when the network was a non-commercial communications link for universities and research labs. Multi-million dollar networks still trade data on the barter principle, or the roughest approximations of real cost. Not surprisingly, these intersections between networks are usually where the traffic backs up.

Bypassing these bottlenecks is not as easy as it might seem. The Internet is made up of many networks, operated by many different firms. Customers can pay a fortune for "industrial strength," rather than "student strength" service, but that service only lasts as far as the firm's network reaches. Sooner or later, Web surfers find themselves in some congested backwater, where no amount of money can make a swamped Web server serve the Internet's needs, whatever their price.

No wonder, then, that more and more users are simply bypassing the public Internet. Companies are setting up private "intranets" within single locations and "extranets" with branches and partners. A group of American research universities plan to build "Internet II," dedicated to academic traffic and free of commercial users, much as the Internet itself was just a few years ago. This month, President Clinton promised to seek \$500 million over five years to help them.

Building a second Internet (and many smaller rivals) might seem an expensive alternative to simply eliminating the economic failings of the first. But the question of how — or whether — the Internet's economic model should be changed is difficult. One of the reasons the Internet has been able to grow so quickly is that its builders avoided the complex accounting and time-and-distance charging of the telephone networks. Yet now that the Internet is carrying as much traffic as the voice network over some routes, some charging by use is already taking place (when traffic was not so heavy, the approximations of flat-fee charges and bartering were good enough; now they can be expensive mistakes).

So which model is best? Or, more fundamentally, what should it cost to communicate? At present, the answer depends on how you do it. Pick up the telephone, and you pay by the mile and the minute. Send a message across the Internet to the same destination (or use special software to make an Internet telephone call) and — even though the message will travel across the same lines — you pay, at most, the price of a local telephone call.

In part the cheapness is because the Internet sends messages more efficiently than local telephone networks: it breaks them down into small digital "packets" that can then be slotted in with other packets traveling over the same network. By contrast, a telephone call requires a whole electronic circuit to itself for the duration of the call.

But in long-distance and international transmissions, the technology is similar: both voice and data are sent as a digital stream along fibre-optic cable. Indeed, nearly all of the Internet runs along lines leased from the telephone companies.

Both telephone companies and the myriad firms that run the Internet therefore have a similar pattern of costs: their big expense comes in installing switches (or "routers") and providing lines. The cost of carrying one extra item is as near to zero as makes no difference — "too cheap to meter," as some would have it.

But if the costs of the telephone companies and the Internet are similar, why are their methods of pricing different? The answer is that telecoms charges bear little relation to costs. The telephone industry is regulated nearly everywhere and in most countries prices are set by bureaucrats and commissions; real costs are hidden by a layer of cross-subsidies. The Internet, on the other hand, is essentially unregulated.

At present, telephone companies typically make less than half their revenue from fixed charges rather than from the price of each call. Tim Kelly, of the International Telecommunication Union in Geneva, reckons that the share of revenue from connection charges and monthly rentals has risen in the past decade from about 33 per cent to 40 per cent; he expects an increase to around 60 per cent over the next ten years.

The companies are not keen on such "rebalancing," since it usually involves reducing lucrative call charges rather than increasing fixed charges. But without it, they are vulnerable to competition, including competition from the Internet, which can offer rival services far less expensively.

The competition, however, may have its silver lining: the Internet encourages telephone use, and in most countries this is charged by the second for local calls — including the ones, sometimes lasting for hours, made by the net-surfers. Add to that the income from installing extra lines, ordered by a surfer's frustrated relations in their desire to make ordinary telephone calls. Add lastly the prospect that the telephone companies will start offering services in competition with the Internet — once the Internet has tested the prices consumers are willing to pay.

What seems reasonably certain, however, is that the impact of the Internet and the spreading deregulation of the telecoms industry will bring prices closer to real costs. The telephone companies will have the biggest pricing adjustment to make. But the Internet too may have to change — perhaps by moving closer to the method of the telephone companies, namely a mix of fixed tariffs and ones based on usage. Economists such as Hal Varian, from the University of California at Berkeley, and Jeff Mackie-Mason, of Michigan University, fret that the present structure of Internet pricing does not reflect its "social costs."

World wide wait

Those are not, as you might think, the conversation-deadening impact of hours spent surfing, but the congestion that periodically occurs on the network. My Internet video call may hold up your electronic mail, imposing a cost on you that I do not notice. Use-based pricing, they argue, is essential to encourage the rational allocation of scarce transmission capacity.

The dangers of congestion have undoubtedly increased in the past year or two, as the Internet has moved from being a government-financed playground for academics to a cornucopia of entertainment, commerce and information. As a result the use of the Internet is growing faster than the number of subscribers, traffic through one of the main connection points has been doubling every six months, says Tony Rutkowski, once head of the Internet Society and now with General Magic, a software firm, while the number of subscribers is doubling only every year. Moreover, the Internet is no longer being used almost exclusively to send text. Instead, thanks partly to the development of the World Wide Web, people can listen to music, make telephone calls and look at film clips. These uses, which are the ones growing most quickly, gobble up far more capacity than text: to send 15 seconds of high quality video munches as much bandwidth as the text of a 700-page book.

A second change means that the costs of congestion are becoming higher. It may not matter if some parts of an electronic letter take a second or two longer than the others to reach their destination. But more and more of the material sent over the Internet needs to arrive immediately to be effective. If some of the hits that make up a video call or a telephone conversation are held up en route, the results are jerky and garbled.

Do these congestion-driven arguments imply the need for new settlement mechanisms? In the case of telephone companies, a system exists so that the company with which a call starts — which kills the caller — can hand some of the proceeds to the company through which the call ends.

Such settlements are a source of endless argument: America's long-distance carriers complain that local telephone companies overcharge them. Moreover, they transfer huge sums of money between countries: in 1994, carriers based in the United States handed over a net \$4.3 billion to foreign carriers. Because countries in which telephoning is cheap (such as America) tend to ring countries where calls are dearer, American carriers grumble that they are subsidising the inefficient and uncompetitive "charge" Internet users in ways that more accurately reflect costs. Several versions will appear in a forthcoming tome on Internet Economics, edited by Lee McKnight and Joseph Bailey of Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). The main suggestion is to attach to messages some indication of their priority (high for a film clip, low for an e-mail message and so on). Users might pay in advance for high-priority traffic; or their payments might vary with the level of congestion.

The means for such fancy solutions will increasingly become available. A new protocol, or standard, called RSVP will soon allow people to specify the quality of service they want and, in theory, to be billed for it. Asynchronous transfer mode, or ATM, a technology that breaks the Internet's many sorts of digital signals into packets of a standard size, will allow a reliable quality of service and make it easier to keep accounts, if it ever becomes widely used.

Undoubtedly, charges would have an effect on the way the Internet is used. A study of "Information Infrastructure Convergence and Pricing: The Internet" by the OECD, published in June, showed that Internet access was far greater in competitive telecommunications markets than in uncompetitive ones. The reason is almost certainly that the average price for leased lines in countries with monopolies was 44 per cent higher than in competitive ones (see chart in box below). There was also a close correlation between Internet use and the structure of local call charges: surfing for hours is free or almost free in the United States and Canada, but most OECD countries charge local callers for the time they spend on the line.

Fearful that use-based pricing would be a dampener, many Internet aficionados cross their fingers that the Internet can muddle on with its present, mostly flat-fee structure. After all, the capacity of the Internet's backbone has increased more than 10,000 times in the past decade; and that has been financed by the enormous increase in the number of subscribers.

In addition, various technical solutions have emerged to slow the growth in traffic, such as the practice of "caching": storing material that one person has looked at close to the point of use, so that the next user need not go all the way to the original site to look at it.

Flat-rates point also to the low cost of a flat-rate sender-keeps-all system. After all, for some telecoms companies to bill a customer for a call costs more than to transmit it. Moreover, the present system suits the idiosyncrasies of the Internet. Each message may hop across a dozen different carriers. Should each be paid something? And the person who initiates an Internet "conversation" may send out a tiny message and receive a huge one. How should the costs be divided?

One way or another, as the Internet expands in both content and usage, a change is surely inevitable. Some of the larger telecoms carriers, such as BT/MCI, are building parallel global Internet networks of their own, on which customers, for a premium payment, will be guaranteed a more reliable service than the public Internet can now offer. They will, says Barbara Dooley, managing editor of CIXtra, a newsletter, have an incentive to carry customers' traffic for as much of the way as possible, to keep control of the quality of service. Once they carry traffic around the world, they will have little incentive to make settlement payments; they will probably agree to accept a certain volume of traffic from each other free.

And what of the public Internet? Its users will face a choice. If they want to surf for free, they will have to put up with the occasional congestion. This will be partly self-regulating: if too many people try to hold video conferences with their children, the quality will become so awful that the youngsters will give up in disgust, and congestion will lessen. The wonderful thing about the Internet is that it still reflects what its users want, not what some large telecommunications company believes they ought to have.

The Economist

Protect elephants through profit, say ivory advocates

By Mark Richardson

WINDHOEK — In the cold Namibian night, the rumble of the ground means only one thing — elephants.

Tourists in their tented camps gasp in awe when they see the huge animals. Farmers gasp in dread.

Namibian farming communities hate elephants. The animals trample crops, drink the water and knock over wind towers that supply power to villages. The farmers are particularly resentful because the creatures offer them no economic benefit in return for the damage.

"People who don't live in brick buildings get rather worried when elephants come to visit," says Brian Jones, an environmental protection officer with the Namibian government. "For as long as people have to protect their crops and installations against a worthless animal, elephants are going to continue to die."

In an attempt to make the country's elephants more valuable, the government has now stepped up its efforts to soften the four-year international ban on the ivory trade. In late October, Windhoek announced it would be presenting new proposals to next June's meeting in Harare of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

The main suggestion is for a resumption of trade in ivory, but only with Japan and under tightly controlled conditions.

Botsuana, Malawi, Namibia and Zimbabwe have opposed the ban on all commercial trade in elephant products since CITES made it international law in 1992, saying that environmentalists in the North do not understand the realities of wildlife conservation in southern Africa.

CITES believes that by outlawing the ivory trade, the market for elephants will end and poaching will no longer pose a significant threat to their survival.

"The international ivory trade decimated African elephants during the 1980s," says the London-based Environmental Investigation Agency, an ardent campaigner for the ban.

During the decade, the agency says, hundreds of thousands of African elephants — an estimated 50 per cent of them — were poached for the trade — "a worldwide black market for ivory was fuelled by the legal commercial trade."

That may be true, says Namibia, but the ban has not ended poaching.

"The flow of seized ivory has not stopped at all since the ban," says Dr. Malan Lindeque, a Namibian government elephant specialist.

His colleague, Peter Tarr, says: "The ivory ban has not taken away the value of ivory — it has increased it. It's a simple case of supply and demand."

The government's solution is to allow local communities to profit from ivory while maintaining curbs on illegal hunting and trade in elephant products from other countries.

This, it argues, will encourage locals to regard elephants as being valuable creatures that are worth protecting.

Environment and Tourism Minister G. J. Hanekom says: "If incentives or local involvement are not put in place, the Namibian government will not be able to justify the existence of large numbers of elephants on farmlands." All revenue from the trade, he promises, will be dedicated to elephant conservation and local community development programmes.

"The only way you can stop poaching is with the help of the community," agrees Tarr. "And you won't get that help unless it's worth something to them."

Namibia has one of the smallest elephant populations in southern Africa — perhaps 6,500. About 200 die each year. With their tusks worth about \$250 a kilogramme, Lindeque estimates that up to \$750,000 a year could be available to local communities.

The Namibian approach to elephant conservation is controversial, however, because, like most African nations, it has stockpiled ivory from elephants that have died during the four years of the ban. The government now wants to sell for the best price about five tonnes of ivory that has been obtained legitimately from elephants that have died naturally. But many more tusks than that are in storage in Windhoek, and it is unclear what will happen to those that are shown to have been poached.

Namibia has little time for such cynicism.

"If you're sitting in your comfortable armchair in London, and can buy your meat at the local supermarket, you can afford to say that elephants are nice things that must be protected at any cost," says environmental protection officer Jones.

"But when they come in the middle of the night, knock over your wind tower, trample all your crops and drink all your water, you're going to have a different perspective."

The government knows its ideas are controversial and may run into opposition from international environmental pressure groups and the media. An Environment and Tourism Ministry briefing paper indicates that one of its tactics will be to seek support from Asian countries during the CITES negotiations by pointing out that "international pressure against trade in African wildlife is similar in many respects to attempts to restrict trade in forest and fisheries products from Asia."

Gemini News Service

Assad: Israeli attack on Syria cannot be ruled out

(Continued from page 1)

He called for peace talks on the basis of the terms agreed at the 1991 Madrid conference — where the Middle East peace process was launched — and on the basis of "respect for commitments made between Arab parties, including Syria, and Israel."

Mr. Assad berated Israel on Monday for portraying recent Syrian military manoeuvres as a threat to the Jewish state.

"Every army has its manoeuvres during the year. And there are some exercises and projects which the Israelis understood to have another aim."

"Anyway, they (the Israelis) held (military) projects at almost the same time near the same place," he said.

Syria is known to have moved some elite units near the Israeli-controlled Mount Hermon in the Golan Heights in September, a deployment that worried Israelis.

Last week, Israel staged manoeuvres on the Golan, and officials said they were preparing for the possibility that Syria might launch a limited war to put pressure on Israel to withdraw from the heights.

Mr. Assad said that during the manoeuvres Israel talked about a military operation in southern Lebanon, where it occupies a border enclave, or striking at strategic sites in Syria.

"This must not happen. No one can say that they will not happen and the possibilities are still there... There is no doubt that the (Syrian) exercises were partly designed to being prepared for what the Israeli government might do," Mr. Assad said.

Mr. Mubarak, who was criticised by Israel last month after Egypt's army held its largest ever military exercises, also defended the Syrian manoeuvres.

"Armies all over the world have manoeuvres and exercises to stay in shape. The manoeuvres and exercises do not mean getting ready for military operations," Mr. Mubarak said.

"When Egypt held its Badr 1996 exercises, all hell broke loose. When the Israeli president was here (in Cairo), there were huge aerial exercises in Israel and the Golan Heights. We were not worried because manoeuvres are normal," he said.

"We are surprised at Israel's concern because they know very well that military operations are not targeted at them at all."

Mr. Assad also repeated Syria's calls for the resumption of peace talks with Israel and blamed what he called Israeli intransigence for the stalemate.

He cited as an example recent reports that an Israeli company was given government permission to dig for oil on the Golan.

"We all know that the peace process came to a halt because of Israeli intransigence. The Israeli position until now suggests that we are not on the road to peace. Yet despite that, we are committed to peace," Mr. Assad said.

PNA requests Jordan to continue its role in Arab East Jerusalem

(Continued from page 1)

was to be discussed between the Palestinians and Israel.

At the same time, Jordan also threw its weight behind the Palestinians' quest to have Arab East Jerusalem as the capital of an independent state that they want to set up in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

In the interim, Jordan told the Palestinians, leaving a vacuum in Arab East Jerusalem, where Israel does not allow the PNA to exercise authority, would only lead to renewed Israeli efforts to Judaise the city and try to unilaterally impose its sovereignty over the Holy City. That Jordanian position was vindicated when Israel opened a new entrance to a tourist tunnel near the Aqsa Mosque without informing the Palestinians or Jordan, despite the Jewish state's recognition of the Kingdom's role in the context of the shrine.

The formal PNA request made on Monday and the Jordanian acceptance of the move appeared to put an end to what the Israeli media have been describing as a lingering dispute between the Palestinians and the Kingdom over the day-to-day administration of the Islamic shrines in Arab Jerusalem.

Dr. Muasher, the information minister, told reporters earlier Monday: "Jordan and the Palestinians agree fully on the issue of Arab East Jerusalem."

The Kingdom and the Palestinians are coordinating their efforts in this regard and the current visit of the PNA delegation was related to that coordination, he added.

Visiting Dutch businesspersons say opportunities exist, but regional problems pose constraints


HOW WHERE DID HE GO?
CICERO?

ARE YOU RUNNING AROUND DOWN THERE IN YOUR Pajamas?

NO, MAM!
I'M CLEANING THE FURNACE!

ance of some bigwig who
has the know ledge.

Birthstone of November:
Topaz — Tiger's Eye.

Answer here: 

Jumble:
Answer: DECRY SJECT TRICK
How the isherma- schmed
HE TACKLED IT

Sports

Australia slows for Melbourne Cup

MELBOURNE (R) — Australia will grind to a virtual halt Tuesday when millions of punters turn their backs on work to see if a giant chestnut horse from Ireland can live up to its reputation and seize this year's Melbourne Cup.

The \$2.2-million (1.74-million) race forces the closure of Australia's second-biggest city for a day and, for a few minutes, calls the entire nation.

Even financial markets take a breather as brokers and dealers for once bet their own money. "Everything dies for the running of the race," said one Melbourne broker.

The cup is Australia's single biggest gambling event, with \$881 million bet through off-course bookmakers last year and millions more wagered in on-course bets and office sweepstakes.

This year many of those millions will be riding on giant Irish stayer Oscar Schindler, bidding to become only the second European raider ever to win the lucrative handicap after the 1993 victory of another Irish horse, Vintage Crop.

The horse, named after a Hollywood movie about a German industrialist who saved more than 1,000 Jews from the Holocaust, won the Irish St. Leger in September and was a first-finishing third to Helissin in the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe last month.

Unfortunately for his competitors, those performances came before the handicappers judged the Melbourne Cup candidates and gave Oscar Schindler a generous riding weight of 56.5 kgs.



Irish horse Oscar Schindler walks the home straight of the Sandown Race Track in Melbourne November 4 with his entourage (from left) strapper John Sullivan, trainer Kevin Prendergast, vet John Stafford, Chris Leiwis and farrier Sean Bell. Oscar Schindler is the favourite for the \$2.3 million Melbourne Cup (Reuters photo)

The Irish horse is the clear favourite at a price on Sunday of around 3-1, out from 5-2 after fears that the flint-hard 3,200-metre course at Flemington might be too much for him.

Last year's winner, Donemus, is carrying the top weight of 58kg at odds of around 7-1 behind last year's runner-up Nothin' Leica Dane and the on-form Saintly, both at 6-1.

Among the outsiders, Istidat at 14-1 and Circles of Gold at 33-1 were both seen having a chance.

An unseasonal lack of

rain in Australia's "bleak city" has caused concern that the track could be flint-hard by Tuesday without either a downpour or a watering by course officials.

Schindler's owner, Oliver Lehan, said he would back trainer Kevin Prendergast if he decided to withdraw the horse because of the state of the ground and concentrate on the more lucrative Japan cup later this month.

"I'd say there isn't a trainer in Australia that wants to risk a horse down," said Lehan, who had to be persuaded by jockey Michael Kinane to enter the race.

Trainer Prendergast said he had not come half-way around the world not to race, but he was concerned about the course.

Three years ago, Vintage Crop's trainer Dermot Weld demanded that race officials water the course on the eve of the race, only to see a torrential downpour next day.

Schindler's status as favourite has been backed by a local animal

behaviourist, Reoff Hutson, who with a colleague at the University of Melbourne has developed a method of helping punters to pick winners.

Hutson, who studied the behaviour of over 800 horses shortly before races and then compared their demeanour against performance, said his money was also on Oscar Schindler.

"They showed him on the news the other night and paraded him before the media and he just looked stunning," Hutson said.

Enqvist upsets Kafelnikov to win Paris Indoor Open

PARIS (R) — Thomas Enqvist prevented Yevgeny Kafelnikov from completing a unique French double when he beat the Russian 6-2 6-4 7-5 in the Paris Open final on Sunday.

The French Open champion, who lost for the first time in three successive tournaments in France, was looking to add the Bercy title to his grand slam triumph at Roland Garros in June.

"I played probably the best match of my life," said the 12th-seeded Swede, who did not drop a set in a tournament that saw nine seeds including number one and holder Pete Sampras tumble in the second round.

"I was in a zone today, I felt like I couldn't lose."

Fourth seed Kafelnikov agreed with that assessment, saying: "He was on top of me from the beginning and never gave me a chance to come to the net."

"When I made good shots, he made better shots."

Enqvist, who returns to the top 10 in the ATP world rankings issued on Monday, raced to the opening set in only 21 minutes.

He broke Kafelnikov, also the Lyon title holder, twice on his way to a 4-1 lead.

The Russian, who still climbs one place to a

world ranking of third after this tournament, struggled to find his touch.

Though he won his service emphatically a few times and looked like he might turn the match in his favour, Enqvist stamped his authority back on the match.

Enqvist sewed up the second set in 32 minutes and the match in 87 minutes, serving three of his 20 aces in the final game.

Kafelnikov, who was also in the doubles final, when he went 1-0 up on his service in the opening game of the third set. A service break then took him to 3-0.

But the Swedish number one, who leads his country at home against France in the Davis Cup final at the end of the month, broke back in the fifth game.

Another of Enqvist's superb shots in the opener was followed by another Kafelnikov mistake, the Russian netting an easy shot with the Swede at his mercy.

It was a ninth victory in 10 finals for Enqvist. He beat compatriot Magnus Gustafsson 6-3 6-2 in Saturday's semifinals, while Kafelnikov defeated Czech Petr Korda 3-6 6-4 6-2.

Knicks crush Hornets, Shaq scores 35 for Lakers; Spurs lose

NEW YORK (R) — The New York Knicks beat the Charlotte Hornets Sunday in a lull, not the scowling predicted between Anthony Mason and Larry Johnson.

Patrick Ewing scored 12 of his 16 points in a first quarter the Knicks won by 26 points, and New York breezed on to a 113-86 victory in their home opener.

"It felt good," Ewing said. "We clicked on all cylinders tonight. We were moving the ball, playing great defence. It was a terrific game for us. We made a conscious effort to play great individual defence."

John Starks scored 17 as the Knicks (2-0) never trailed Charlotte (11-1), which lost for the first time under new coach Dave Cowens.

New York shot 65 percent (15-of-23) in the 37-11 first quarter while holding Charlotte to 36 percent (5-of-14). The Knicks led 70-36 at halftime.

The game provided an opportunity for a confrontation between Mason, bitter over being traded from his home town to Charlotte and insistent he was the better player, and Johnson, his high-priced replacement in the retooled Knicks team.

But the game was over so quickly, nothing much happened between the two hurly forwards. Johnson finished with 12 points and Mason, who was cheered by the Madison Square Garden crowd during the team introductions, had 10.

"At first I was intimidated by the garden," Johnson said. "I was ready to play. I wasn't really nervous. I just wanted to go out and try to put on a show for the fans and my team."

At Los Angeles, Shaquille O'Neal had 35 points and 19 rebounds as the Lakers used a 20-2 run midway through the fourth quarter to take a 91-85 victory over the Minnesota Timberwolves.

Eighteen-year-old Laker

Magic acquire Seikaly in five-player deal

ORLANDO (R) — The Orlando Magic, trying to fill the big gap left by Shaquille O'Neal's departure, acquired centre Rony Seikaly in a five-player deal with the Golden State Warriors at the weekend.

Orlando also got forward/centre Clifford Rozier and a future second-round draft pick from Golden State for forward Donald Rnyal and centres Felton Spencer and Jon Koncak.

In Seikaly, the Magic get the centre they were looking for after O'Neal departed as a \$120 million-plus free agent for the Los Angeles Lakers over the summer, and after Koncak went down with a season-ending knee injury in September.

Seikaly, a 6-foot-11 (2.11 metres) native of Greece, held out of training camp and missed Golden State's 97-85 loss to the Clippers. He played his first six seasons in the league with the Miami Heat before being dealt to the Warriors exactly two years ago.

Seikaly averaged 12.1 points and 7.8 rebounds in 64 games last year before missing the final 15 contests with a thumb injury. He averaged 14.8 points and 9.8 rebounds over 539 career games.

"With so few options available, we're delighted to get a player of Rony's calibre in anchor us at the centre position," said Magic general manager John Gabriel. "He, along with Clifford will give us added size and experience in the frontcourt."

Rozier began his third NBA season by going scoreless in five minutes off the bench. The 6-foot-11 (2.11 metres) former first-round draft pick averaged 5.1 points and 5.5 rebounds over 125 contests his first two seasons.

Seikaly and Rozier will be with the team when Orlando travels to Tokyo to meet the New Jersey Nets this Thursday and Friday.

guard Kobe Bryant became the youngest player to appear in an NBA game. He missed his only shot and grabbed one rebound in six minutes.

Toni Gullit registered 26 points and 14 rebounds, and Kevin Garnett and James Robinson scored 12 points apiece for the Timberwolves.

In San Antonio, Ricky Pierce scored 15 points to lead a balanced attack and the Denver Nuggets did not allow a basket for 11 minutes in the first half of an 88-79 victory over the punchless Spurs.

Antonio McDye added 13 points and Laphonso Ellis 12 for the Nuggets, who snapped an eight-game losing streak to the Spurs. Denver led by as many as 20 points.

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Eagles beat Cowboys on end-zone interception for TD

DALLAS (R) — The Philadelphia Eagles beat the Dallas Cowboys 31-21 Sunday on the kind of play defences dream about: an end-zone interception, a run to daylight, a lateral and a 90-yard touchdown scamper.

Trailing 24-21, Dallas had the ball 1st-and-goal at the Eagles' 3-yard line with 1:16 to go in the fourth quarter. The Eagle defence held Emmitt Smith for just one yard on first down, then stuffed him for a one-yard loss.

On third down, linebacker James Willis intercepted a pass by Troy Aikman in the end zone, ran out to the 10, then lateraled to Troy Vincent, who raced 90 yards for a touchdown with 22 seconds left in the game.

"It was my first interception," said Willis. "That's big. I was too tired to keep it, though."

The win moved the Eagles (7-2) into a first-place tie with Washington in the NFC East, two games ahead of Dallas (5-4), and snapped Dallas' four-game win streak.

"We fought them for four quarters," said Eagles coach Ray Rhodes. "We talked about stepping up and making plays. The theme of our team is to find a way to win every week."

"Today, we snatched defeat from the jaws of victory," said Cowboys coach Barry Switzer. "I don't think there was anyone here that didn't think we would win the game with 40 seconds left and the ball at the 3-yard line."

Ty Detmer completed 19-of-33 passes for 217 yards and a touchdown, and ran for a score for Philadelphia. Ricky Walters rushed for 116 yards and a TD on 24 carries.

Aikman was 21-of-33 for 189 yards. Smith rushed for 113 yards and two touchdowns on 24 carries.

In Buffalo, Darick Holmes rushed for 122 yards and three touchdowns and Thurman Thomas added 107 yards and a score as the Bills ended the seven-game win streak of the Washington Redskins, 38-13.

Jim Kelly was 19-for-23 for 206 yards and also ran for a score for the Bills (6-3), who amassed 266 yards on the ground and stayed tied with the AFC East lead with England. Buffalo had rushing touchdowns,

tying a team record. "I guess I'm not dead yet," joked Kelly, "but seriously the running game with Darick and Thurman Thomas made it easy for me."

In Indianapolis, the San Diego Chargers intercepted Jim Harbaugh four times and John Carney kicked four field goals in a 26-19 victory over the Colts.

"We didn't get the job done," said Harbaugh.

Sean Salisbury made his second straight start at quarterback for the injured Stan Humphries and passed for 237 yards and two touchdowns with no interceptions for San Diego.

At New England, Drew Bledsoe threw for 419 yards and three touchdowns, two of them to tight end Ben Coates, and Curtis Martin added three scoring plunges as the Patriots beat the Miami Dolphins 42-23.

Bledsoe, who was 30-for-41, gave New England a momentum-building 21-17 lead midway through the third quarter when he hit Coates for a 23-yard score after a controversial fumble call against Miami's Karim Abdul-Jabbar, who ran for 104 yards on 29 carries.

In Green Bay, Brett Favre threw four TD passes — two to Terry Mickens — and spoiled the return of Don Majkowski to Lambeau Field as the Packers beat the Detroit Lions 28-18.

Majkowski, starting for the injured Scott Mitchell for Detroit, was quarterback of the Packers from 1987-92.

Green Bay (8-1) has won five straight.

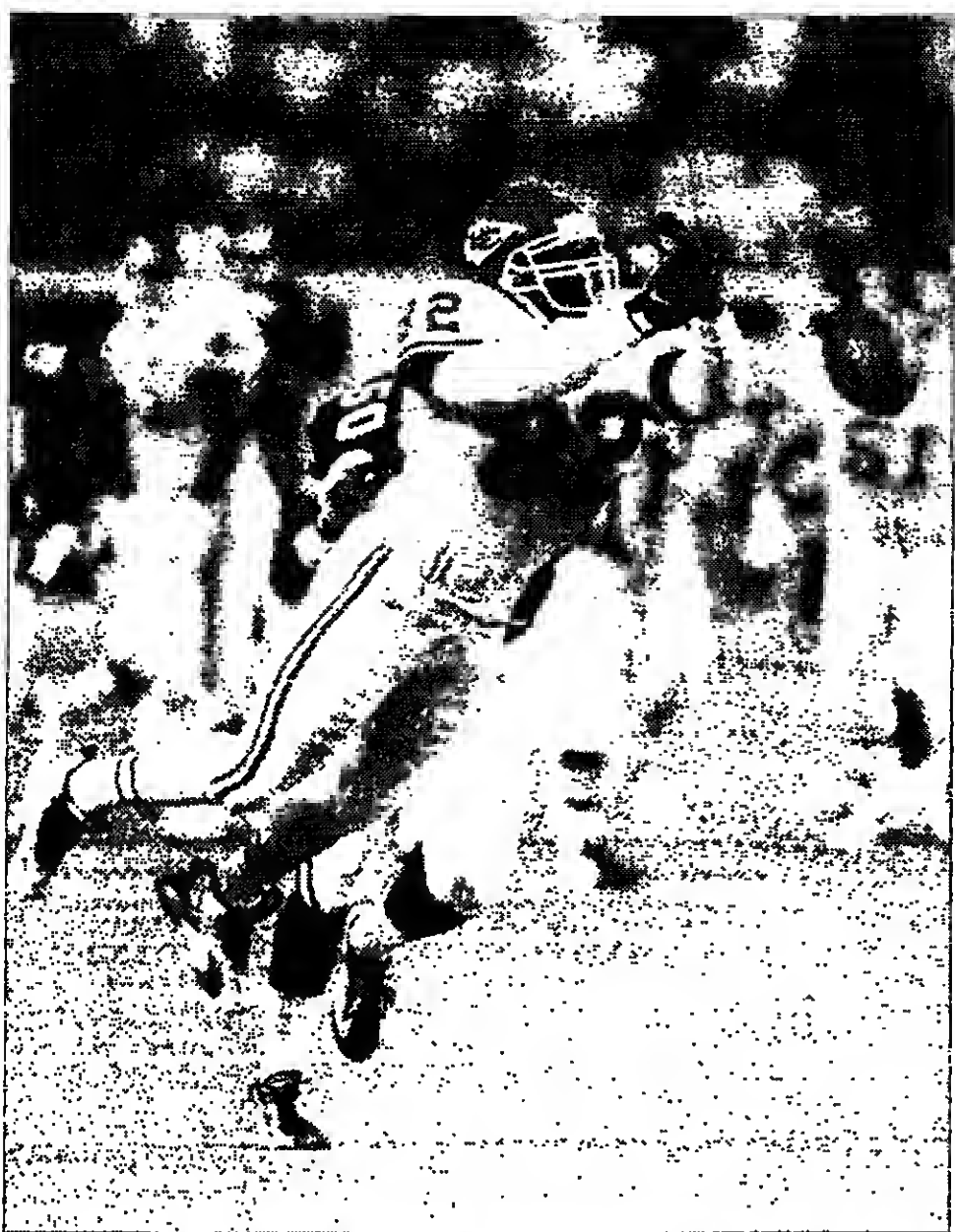
In Atlanta, the Falcons (1-8) became the last NFL team to win this season, beating the Carolina Panthers 20-17 as Jamal Anderson ran for 109 yards and a touchdown.

In Seattle, defensive end Michael McCrary blocked a field goal, scooped it up and lateraled to Robert Blackmon, who returned it 61 yards for a touchdown with four seconds left to lift the Seahawks past the Houston Oilers, 23-16.

At Minnesota, Greg Hill ran for two touchdowns in a 25-second span late in the fourth quarter as the Kansas City Chiefs beat the Vikings 21-6.

Minnesota played without starting quarterback Warren Moon and running back Robert Smith.

At New York, Brad Daluiso kicked three field



Kansas City Chiefs wide receiver Derrick Walker (82) can't quite reach a pass as Minnesota Vikings linebacker Jeff Brady (50) defends in the first quarter of their NFL game at the Metrodome (Reuters photo)

goals and back-up quarterback Danny Kanell, inserted when Dave Brown suffered back spasms after a first-quarter sack, threw his first career touchdown as the Giants beat the Arizona Cardinals 16-8.

In Pittsburgh, Jerome Bettis rushed for 129 yards and two touchdowns in his first game against his former team and quarterback Kordell Stewart added a pair of scoring runs as the Steelers crushed the St. Louis Rams 42-6.

In Chicago, Raymont Harris ran for 118 yards and scored on a one-yard plunge midway through the third quarter, taking advantage of Ernie Rhet's fumble, as the Bears edged the Tampa Bay Buccaneers 13-10.

In Baltimore, Doug Pedery's third field goal of the game, a 34-yarder as time expired, gave the Cincinnati

Bengals a come-from-behind 24-21 triumph over the Ravens.

Cincinnati erased a 21-3 halftime deficit.

In New Orleans, Jerry Rice reached another milestone with his 1,000th career reception and Steve Young ran and threw for touchdowns, leading the San Francisco 49ers to a 24-17 victory over the Saints.

Rice, who holds NFL records in catches, yards and touchdowns, caught a nine-yard pass before stepping out of bounds at the New Orleans 2-yard line for his 1,000th catch. On 4th-and-1, young scored on a quarter-back sneak to give the 49ers a 24-14 advantage 3:29 into the fourth quarter.

NFL RESULTS

Atlanta	20	Carolina	17
Cincinnati	24	Baltimore	21
Chicago	13	Tampa Bay	10
Philadelphia	31	Dallas	21
Green Bay	28	Detroit	18
San Diego	26	Indianapolis	19
NY Giants	16	Arizona	8
Pittsburgh	42	St. Louis	6
Buffalo	38	Washington	13
Kansas City	21	Minnesota	6
New England	42	Miami	23
Seattle	23	Houston	16
San Francisco	24	New Orleans	17

Amman to host 50th World Bodybuilding Championships

Hasanein heads 10-man Jordanian team

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan's national bodybuilding team was narrowed down to ten competitors Monday following their final rehearsal before the 50th World Amateur Bodybuilding Championships open here next week.

As host country, Jordan will be allowed to enter 10 players with only the five best results counting towards the final overall score when the competition gets underway Nov. 14.

The Kingdom's best

chance in the championship comes in the over 90-kilogramme category which will be headed by the most experienced of the Kingdom's athletes and a holder of many world-class titles — Mustafa Hasanein.

The entrants in the rest of the categories came as follows:

65-kilogrammes: Ibrahim Srour
70-kilogrammes: Akram Salem, Nasrallah Mahmoud
80-kilogrammes: Bilal Abu Rajouh
90-kilogrammes: Ahmad Sa'afeen, Naseem Farid,

Khalil Dabaj
Over 90-kilogrammes: Mustafa Hasanein, Hasan Anani, Firas Abdul Malek.

Sixty-nine countries will be taking part in the first world championship to be hosted by Jordan.

Teams are expected to start arriving in Amman Nov. 12. The weigh-in and testing will be held the following day when the International Congress of the Bodybuilding Federation holds its meeting.

Competition will begin at the Sports Palace Nov. 14 and the final round will conclude the championship Friday Nov. 15.

Wihdat knock out Hussein in Jordan Cup semifinal

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Premier League titleholders Al Wihdat Monday beat Al Hussein 2-1 to advance to the final match of the Jordan Cup competition.

The loss meant another title blow for Al Hussein whose only major title in the past years was the 1994 Federation Shield.

Two of the 1996 competitions — the Cup winners Cup and Federation

Shield have already been won by Al Faisali and Al Ramtha. That leaves only the Premier League title up for grabs. Al Faisali led the 10-team standings at the end of the first round of the competition which resumes Nov. 26.

The other Jordan Cup semifinal groups Al Ramtha and Al Ahli in Irbid Tuesday. Al Ahli will be going into the Irbid match with high spirits after their 2-1 win over nine-time competition record holders Al Faisali.

United States beat Guatemala in World Cup qualifier

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States, which surprised the soccer world by reaching the second round of the 1994 World Cup, took its first step towards the 1998 championship Sunday, beating Guatemala 2-0.

A second-half goal from leading scorer Eric Wynalda and a late tally by Brian McBride — his first international score — were enough to carry the Americans through in their first CONCACAF Group A qualifying match.

The win put the United States atop Group A in the semifinal qualifying round to decide the three teams from the North America, Central America and Caribbean region that will advance to France 1998.

A tough Guatemalan team, which has one point

from a 1-1 draw away to Trinidad and Tobago, was playing its first match since 84 fans were crushed to death three weeks ago in a stampede before the qualifying match against Costa Rica.

The U.S. Team, playing with only three defenders at the back and prodded forward by midfielders Claudio Reyna, Tab Ramos and John Harkes, found it difficult to find a rhythm in the chilly sunshine at RFK Stadium.

But they broke through ten minutes into the second half when Reyna found space on the left wing to swing in a cross over the head of Guatemalan defender Eduardo Acevedo. The ball fell sweetly for Wynalda on the edge of the goal area and he brought it down with his right foot before sliding a

left-foot shot low past keeper Edgar Estrada.

It was Wynalda, who has scored more goals than any other U.S. International, who laid on the clincher for McBride a minute from the end.

Guatemala threatened early in the game and twice Martin Machou came close, forcing Kasey Keller to tip his shot from 10 yards over the bar.

The Guatemalan players were wearing black arm-bands in remembrance of the 84 fans crushed to death three weeks ago.

The United States Soccer Federation has pledged to donate \$25,000 to the disaster relief effort.

The United States plays its next World Cup qualifier next Sunday against Trinidad and Tobago in Richmond, Virginia.

Top players ATP World Championship

PARIS (R) — For a tournament that saw 14 seeds tumble by midweek, the Paris Open won by Swede Thomas Enqvist on Sunday had surprisingly little effect on the field for the ATP World Championship in two weeks.

Stuttgart Open Winner Boris Becker, Olympic gold medalist Andre Agassi and Wimbledon champion Richard Krajicek occupied the three undecided berths before the seeds came into the tournament at Bercy in the second round Tuesday.

With South African Wayne Ferreira losing in the third round at Bercy, the ATP announced that Becker's place in the eight-player World Championship in Hanover starting on November 19 was safe.

Agassi, who secured his berth when Krajicek pulled out of the Stockholm Open with a sore knee. The Dutchman remains vulnerable in eighth place.

Ferreira must reach at least the final in Stockholm in order to overtake Krajicek and qualify, the ATP said.

American Todd Martin, seeded second in Stockholm, Chilean Marcelo Rios, who is playing in the Santiago Open, or Enqvist could break in to the reserve berth with good results this week.

The Hanover qualifiers so far are world No. 1 Pete Sampras, Michael Chang, Kafelnikov, Goran Ivanisevic, Muster, Becker and Agassi.

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TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Telecommunications Regulatory Commission

The Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC) of Jordan announces that it has released a Call for Tenders for a second national public paging licence. The new service operator will compete with the existing licensee, Jordan Radio Paging (JRP). Following consultation with the industry, the TRC issued the Call for Tenders dated November 4, 1996 (TRC Call 1996-1), which sets out the process that the TRC will follow in awarding the new licence. The process consists of two phases. During the first phase, a special tender evaluation committee will review the technical aspects of the submissions from all applicants. Those applicants who successfully pass this phase will participate in the second phase, in which their sealed financial proposals will be opened at a meeting of all qualifying applicants. The applicant offering the highest licence acquisition fee will be invited to sign a licence agreement to provide the paging service.

Parties interested in applying for the new paging licence may obtain a copy of the Call for Tenders from the TRC upon payment of JD 1500 before December 5, 1996. The deadline for the submission of applications is February 4, 1997.

For a copy of TRC Call 1996-1, or for further information, contact:
The Office of the Director General
Telecommunications Regulatory Commission
P.O. Box 850987, Amman 11185, Jordan
Telephone (962) 6-866231 - Fax (962) 6-863641

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Israel planning two new W. Bank 'cities'

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon plans to build two Jewish cities in the West Bank that would bring 100,000 more settlers to the occupied territory, a spokesman said Monday.

The project — the most ambitious so far by Mr. Sharon, mastermind of a large settlement construction drive in the early 1990s — has not yet been approved by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

If built, the two cities would nearly double the Jewish settler population, which now stands at 145,000, and make it increasingly difficult for the Palestinians to establish a state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Relations between Israel's hardline government and the Palestinians have become increasingly strained, particularly because of Mr. Netanyahu's plans to expand settlements and because of a deadlock in talks over an Israeli troop pull-back from Hebron.

The two new Jewish cities would be built by expanding existing settlements and eventually merging them, said Mr. Sharon who, as housing minister in the early 1990s, oversaw Israel's largest settlement construction drive. Mr. Sharon and Deputy Housing Minister Meir Porush have set up a special administration for the project.

During a tour of the West Bank on Sunday, Mr. Sharon told settlers 21,000 houses can be added to the existing settlements there, and can be linked with roads to form a "continuity of settlement." The number of settlers would be over 100,000.

One of the towns, Kiryat Sefer, will be just inside the

West Bank, half way between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. The other consists of a chain of five small mountain settlements, deeper inside the West Bank.

"There is enough land for 10,000 to 11,000 additional homes at Kiryat Sefer, and there is enough land in the area of Dolev and Nahliel, the eastern chain as it is called, for roughly 12,000 more apartments," Mr. Sharon's spokesman, Ranan Gissin, said Monday.

"If the building is carried out in accordance with the master plan it will be possible to achieve two cities," Mr. Gissin told the Associated Press.

Mr. Sharon told settlers in Nahliel the area was important not only as part of the "Biblical land of Israel," but also strategically. "They have a security importance of the highest order," he said.

"There is enough room for both the Jewish and the Arab population," Mr. Sharon added.

Palestinian land expert Khader Shkirat said Monday that if built, the two cities would prevent the creation of a Palestinian state. "There will be no territorial continuity between the Palestinian cities in the West Bank," Mr. Shkirat said.

In spite of Mr. Sharon's announcement, the settlers council launched a series of protests against the Netanyahu government, saying it had not lived up to campaign promises to expand Jewish settlements.

"We have no choice but to tell this government, loud and clear 'this is not what you promised before the elections,'" said council spokesman Aharon Domb.

Jewish settlers in the West Bank city of Hebron announced Monday that

they planned to build a \$2 million apartment building in the city's Avraham Avinu settler compound. The settlers said they still awaited final approval to begin construction.

The announcement was likely to further increase tensions in the city of 450 settlers and 120,000 Palestinians.

The anti-settlement movement Peace Now denounced Mr. Sharon's plan, which it said is part of a scheme to create a settlement corridor running from the Kiryat Sefer region along the green line to Jerusalem.

The Netanyahu government which came to office in June, announced in August that it was lifting a four-year-old freeze on settlement expansion.

But at the time Mr. Netanyahu stressed the decision in the short-term concerned enlarging existing settlements and not creating new Jewish colonies in the Palestinian areas.

The defence ministry was given authority for approving settlement projects and has since authorised construction of several thousand housing units around Jerusalem and along the green line.

These decisions have drawn angry protests from Palestinians and criticism from foreign governments, including the United States and the European Union, which say settlement expansion violates the spirit of Israeli-Palestinian peace accords.

Settlement leaders however have complained about the relative timidity of the new government's policy, saying their requests for tens of thousands of new homes in areas throughout the territories have gone largely unanswered.



IN MEMORY: Yitzhak Rabin's widow Leah (right), his daughter Dalia (second left), granddaughter Noa (left), and Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai dedicate a statue in memory of the assassinated Israeli prime minister at the Israeli defence ministry and army's general command headquarters in Tel Aviv on Monday on the eve of the first anniversary of Rabin's murder. The camp was renamed Yitzhak Rabin General Command Base (Reuters photo)

Sudan, Uganda sign draft document to settle differences

TEHRAN (Agencies) — The foreign ministers of Sudan and Uganda signed a draft peace agreement Monday intended to end the two neighbours' hostilities over the harbouring of rebels.

The agreement was mediated by Iran, which has close ties with the Islamic government of Sudan.

The accord will become final after ratification by the Sudanese and Ugandan heads of state at a December meeting in the Ugandan capital of Kampala, the Tehran broadcast said.

President Hashemi Rafsanjani attended the signing of the agreement. Details of the accord were not provided.

Uganda and Sudan have since 1989 accused each other of arming and sheltering rebels fighting their governments. The feud culminated in April 1995, when Kampala broke diplomatic relations with Khartoum.

Last month, the two agreed to joint border monitoring teams as part of an Iranian-brokered agreement and foreign ministers from the two impoverished nations opened peace talks in Tehran Sunday, with Malawi attending as an observer.

"Developments up to now indicate that the two sides are committed to the agreements which have been reached, and it is in the interest of the two countries to have sincere relations," said Sudan's foreign minister, Ali Osman Mohamed Taha.

Uganda accuses Sudan of aiding two rebel groups in western and northwestern Uganda that are fighting to overthrow President Yoweri Museveni's government.

Sudan denies the charge and says Uganda supports the Sudan People's Liberation Army, which has fought successive Khartoum governments since 1983 to gain autonomy for the mainly animist and Christian south.

The two sides will meet in the Ugandan capital in December to "evaluate the latest progress made and take decisions on taking further steps," a final communiqué said without giving the exact date.

Mr. Museveni told a press conference last week that Uganda was not serious about signing an agreement with Khartoum, which he accused of violating earlier accords.

Israel seeks Western help to press Iran, Syria over 'threats'

TEL AVIV (AFP) — In an unusual bid to prevent expected suicide attacks by the Islamic Jihad movement, Israel has asked Western governments to pressure Iran and Syria to intervene with the group, officials said Monday.

Mr. Netanyahu asked German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and U.S. Ambassador Martin Indyk to intervene with Tehran and Damascus to block an attack by Islamic Jihad, which Israel says receives support from both governments, officials in the prime minister's office said.

Israel also asked France for help in the effort to bring outside pressure to bear on groups planning anti-Israeli attacks, they said.

"We have reliable information about the involvement of foreign elements in the preparation of attacks designed to sabotage the peace process," Mr. Netanyahu told a press conference on Sunday, referring to ongoing negotiations on extending Palestinian self-rule.

Netanyahu spokesman David Bar-Ilan would not confirm the details in Monday's newspaper reports, but said there was evidence militants planning the attacks were getting help.

"The obvious implication of our warnings and our appeals is that there are two countries involved here,"

Mr. Bar-Ilan told the Associated Press. "We would not go to the extent of appealing to the countries involved unless we had substantial evidence."

Israel's security forces have been on high alert following warnings last month that Islamic Jihad planned to carry out a bombing attack and were already in Israel.

Taking unprecedented measures, police set up checkpoints on the outskirts of Tel Aviv and patrolled shopping malls. On Sunday, motorists were delayed for as much as three hours as traffic came to a standstill on the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv highway.

The Haaretz daily said police barred cars from a 20-metre radius around Shalom Tower, an office high-rise in downtown Tel Aviv. Security directors at hotels in the Tel Aviv area were asked to check suspicious guests closely and to keep an eye on cars parked in hotel parking lots, the report said.

The security measures reportedly cost Israel's economy between \$1.6 million and \$2.2 million a day. Mr. Bar-Ilan said many of the losses were recoverable, such as making up lost work hours.

Mr. Bar-Ilan said the warnings about attacks were "extremely specific" and that Israel would have to live with checkpoints and

road closures for some time to come.

Palestinian security officials have played down the Israeli fears, saying they had no specific warnings of impending attacks.

The Yediot Achronot daily said Chancellor Kohl promised Mr. Netanyahu to act immediately and that the chancellor's aides got in touch with intelligence officials and political leaders in Iran.

The daily said Mr. Kohl also dispatched his special envoy, Bernd Schmidbauer, to Beirut. Both Islamic Jihad, a Palestinian group, and the Iranian-backed Hizbollah, operate from Beirut. The U.S. State Department also issued a statement over the weekend advising its citizens in Israel to avoid public buses and bus stops in coming days due to the danger of suicide attacks.

In February and March, Islamic Jihad and another movement opposed to peace with Israel, the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), carried out four suicide bombings in Israel, killing 58 people plus the bombers.

Despite the ongoing threat of attack, Israeli police on Monday dismantled some roadblocks set up over the weekend on major inter-city highways after widespread complaints that the measures were causing huge traffic jams and disrupting business.

COLUMN

Romanians lured to polls by prizes

BUCHAREST (R) — Romanians had novel incentives to vote in their general election on Sunday — lottery prizes ranging from tractors to television sets. Romanian state television, which the opposition says is controlled by President Ion Iliescu's ruling party, offered a tractor to the polling district with the highest turnout in each of the country's seven historical regions. Lotteries are legal under post-communist electoral rules. The tractor offer is aimed at drawing voters in rural districts, where Mr. Iliescu's main electoral strength lies. Romania's largest private television channel, PROTV, was holding a draw for television sets and a mystery grand prize open to those able to prove they had voted on Sunday by showing stamped documents. Viewers had also been invited during the campaign to forecast the outcome of the election on the back of a postcard for a prize of around \$25,000.

'Fergie' makes royal advertisement

LONDON (R) — Britain's Duchess of York, known for flouting convention, seems set to raise royal eyebrows again — this time by endorsing a product for an advertisement. In the ad, the duchess is shown on a yacht, holding the new Olympus digital camera while passing New York City's Statue of Liberty. Britain's press association news agency said on Sunday, Magazines carrying the ad will appear in continental Europe but not in Britain — an attempt to spare Fergie's former royal in-laws embarrassment. The flame-haired duchess is divorced from Queen Elizabeth's second son, Prince Andrew. The press association said the duchess, whose financial woes have been widely publicised, was being paid more than 20,000 pounds (\$30,000) for the ad.

Money woes leave Kennedy speech site in the dark

BERLIN (R) — The lights have gone off in Berlin's Schoeneberg city hall and there is no hot water in the building where U.S. President John F. Kennedy paid his historic tribute to the city's lonely cold war ordeal. Under enormous pressure to save money, the city once split by the iron curtain can no longer afford the electricity to keep the lifts operating in the building where Kennedy delivered his famous "Ich bin ein Berliner" speech in 1963. Seven years after the Berlin Wall was brought down, freedom's most famous outpost is broke.

Telekom stamps out German sex line for huge mailings

BONN (AFP) — Deutsche Telekom was not amused when a sex line sent "millions" of messages to addresses on the Internet, paralysing Deutsche Telekom's T-Online service for several days, a company spokesman said Monday. It closed the line after thousands of German Internet users were deprived of electronic mail from Friday to Sunday because of the large-scale mailing, he said. International messages could not be sent or received, but service will be back to normal by Tuesday, he said. Deutsche Telekom said the line on Friday had carried out automatic dispatch of advertising messages on Internet "in a volume of millions" of messages. Such mass mailing is prohibited, but it is almost impossible to enforce the ban.

Mideast clamours for Clinton's attention amid uncertain moves

WASHINGTON (R) — With Israeli-Palestinian peace in turmoil, popular strife simmering behind the thrones of the Gulf, and Iran and Iraq still defiant, the Middle East is looking to Washington.

Friends and foes wonder what President Bill Clinton plans for the world's most unstable region if, as predicted by polls, he wins a second term this week.

Arabs, frustrated by delays in implementing Palestinian self-rule, hope he will "get tough" on Israel. The Jewish state and some of its supporters in the United States want Mr. Clinton to further box in Iraq's Saddam Hussein and isolate Iran.

Much will depend on whether Mr. Clinton veers off the domestic issues which brought him to power and tries to leave his mark on history through a foreign policy triumph.

Russia, China, Bosnia all have a claim to presidential attention ahead of the Middle East but the region has a fascination for would-be statesmen and Washington has already invested heavily in Israeli-Arab peace.

The first indication of any shift will be in Mr. Clinton's appointment of a secretary of state to replace Warren Christopher who is widely expected to retire.

Richard Holbrooke, the U.S. mediator on Bosnia, would bring a radical shift, not least in style, but he is a long shot, political analysts believe.

Anthony Lake, the national security adviser, would also mean change.

The front runner among Washington pundits, however, is United Nations Ambassador Madeleine Albright who spells continuity.

"I doubt there will be any major change in our approach to the Middle East," a U.S. official said.

"With the demise of the Soviet Union as a superpower the Israeli-

Palestinian conflict is no longer the trigger for world war three. There is no urgency for a change," the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

A majority of foreign policy analysts in Washington agree.

"The big picture won't change," said Yahya Sadowski, a Middle East specialist at the Brookings Institution.

"Domestic policy is the first priority. Clinton only puts energy into foreign policy when it becomes a hot issue," domestically...like Bosnia," he said.

Mr. Clinton has invested most time in the Israeli-Palestinian peace deal which has started to fray since the May election of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Some Palestinians and American Jews believe Mr. Clinton will lean on Mr. Netanyahu to restart implementation of the 1993 Oslo self-rule accord, which is snagged on Israel's reluctance to withdraw from the West Bank city of Hebron.

"The screws will be turned on the day after the election," says Doh Zakheim, a former Pentagon official and Israeli analyst. "Clinton does not like to be rebuffed."

Mr. Clinton has enormous political, financial and military leverage over Israel but most analysts and pro-Israel lobbyists doubt he wants to use it.

"The notion that the United States can force the Israeli prime minister is wishful thinking," says Judith Kipper, a Middle East analyst at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies.

"Clinton will not put pressure on a friend, it's not his style," adds an Israeli lobbyist on Capitol Hill.

Ms. Kipper notes that Mr. Clinton kept the same Middle East team of advisers as George Bush. Based on their record she argues for a change.

"Policy-makers are not

looking over the horizon beyond Hebron...Change is possible but it depends on the team," she said. The stalling of the peace process had undermined U.S. credibility and, more important, eroded Palestinian confidence.

"You don't get that back overnight," she said.

U.S. officials counter that Washington cannot take the lead. "We can't want peace more than the parties themselves," one said.

The administration's focus on Oslo means Washington is not heeding the threat to its interests from growing instability and economic woes in the Gulf, some analysts say.

"In the Gulf we are squabbling with our allies and beefing up our enemies," Mr. Sadowski argues.

Some say Washington is insensitive to the political and financial burden it places on Gulf states which have shelled out an estimated \$900 billion on security and U.S. arms since the 1991 Gulf war.

"We are making the Gulf pay for its security, making them buy arms...Yet the biggest threat to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait is internal," Mr. Sadowski said.

"We are dealing with governments with a crisis of legitimacy," Ms. Kipper said. The two mainstays of U.S. policy — urging Gulf countries to recognise Israel and have them accept and pay for the U.S. as regional policeman — are driving a wedge between rulers and ruled, she argues.

Many analysts urge a second-term Clinton to amend his "dual containment" policy of isolating Iran and Iraq.

"Dual containment is not a policy but an admission that we don't have a policy," said James Zogby of the Arab American Institute.

"Dual containment is a slogan more than a policy," Ms. Kipper agrees. "It's not working because they are not contained."

Handwritten signature: *سليمان العبد*